Commentary

Volume Seventy-three, Number One, January 1982

Reagan & the Russians

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Notes from the American Underground Midge Decter

Israel and the Messiah Jacob Katz

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Collaboration Par Excellence Roger Kaplan

BOOKS IN REVIEW:
J.B. Kelly/Susan Seidner Adler/Eric M. Breindel/Michael Levin/Chester E. Finn, Jr.

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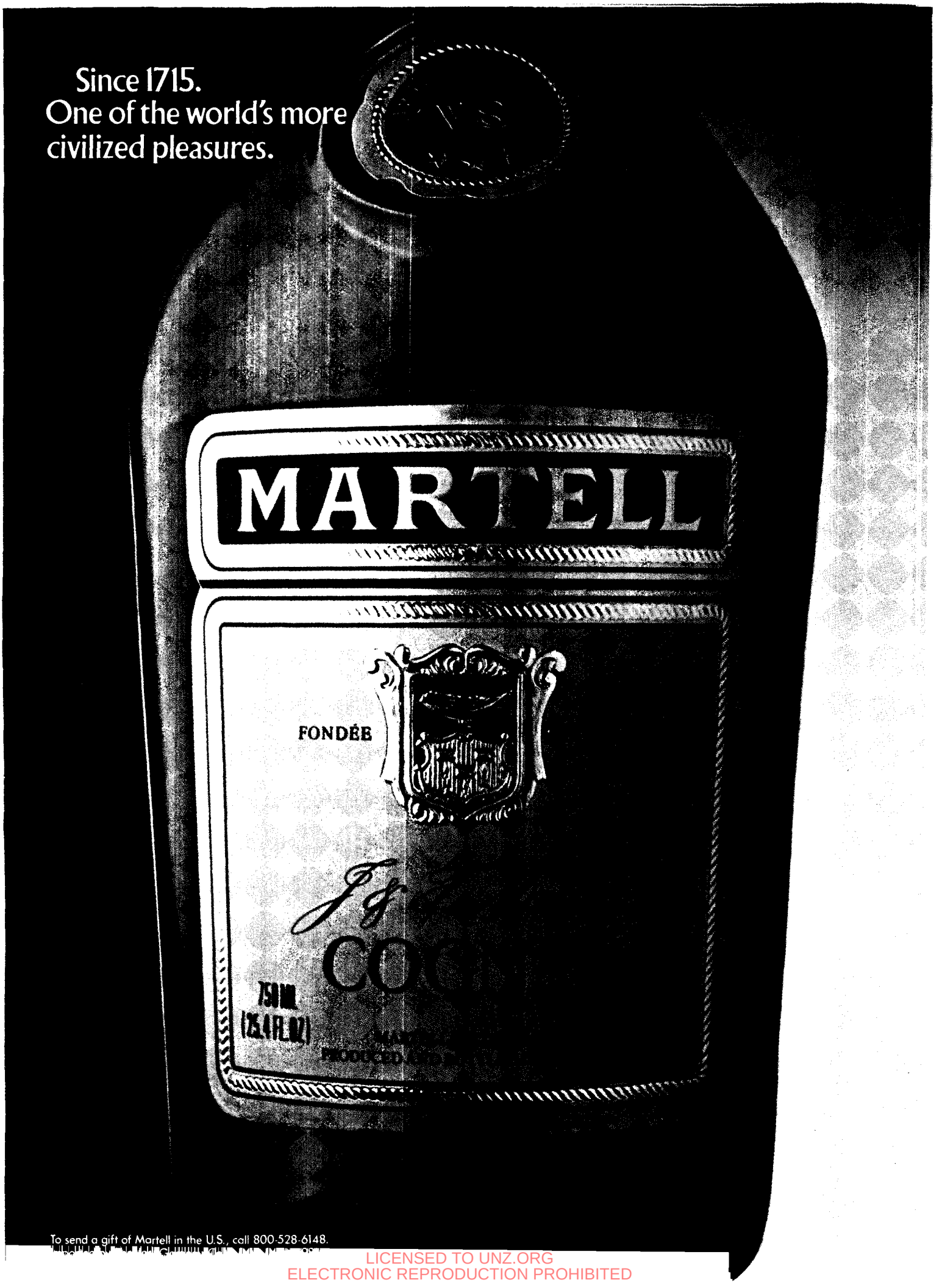

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Commentary

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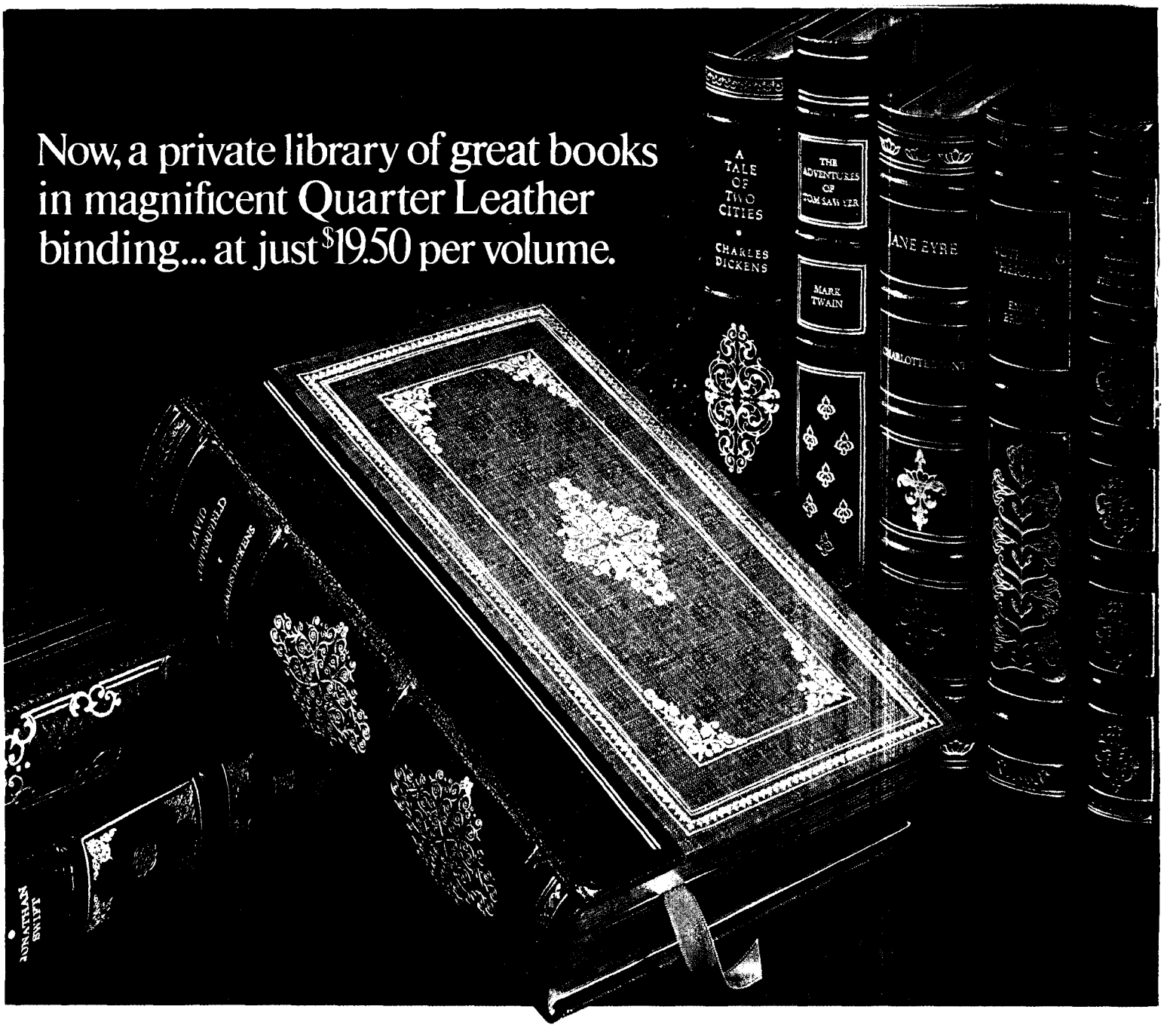
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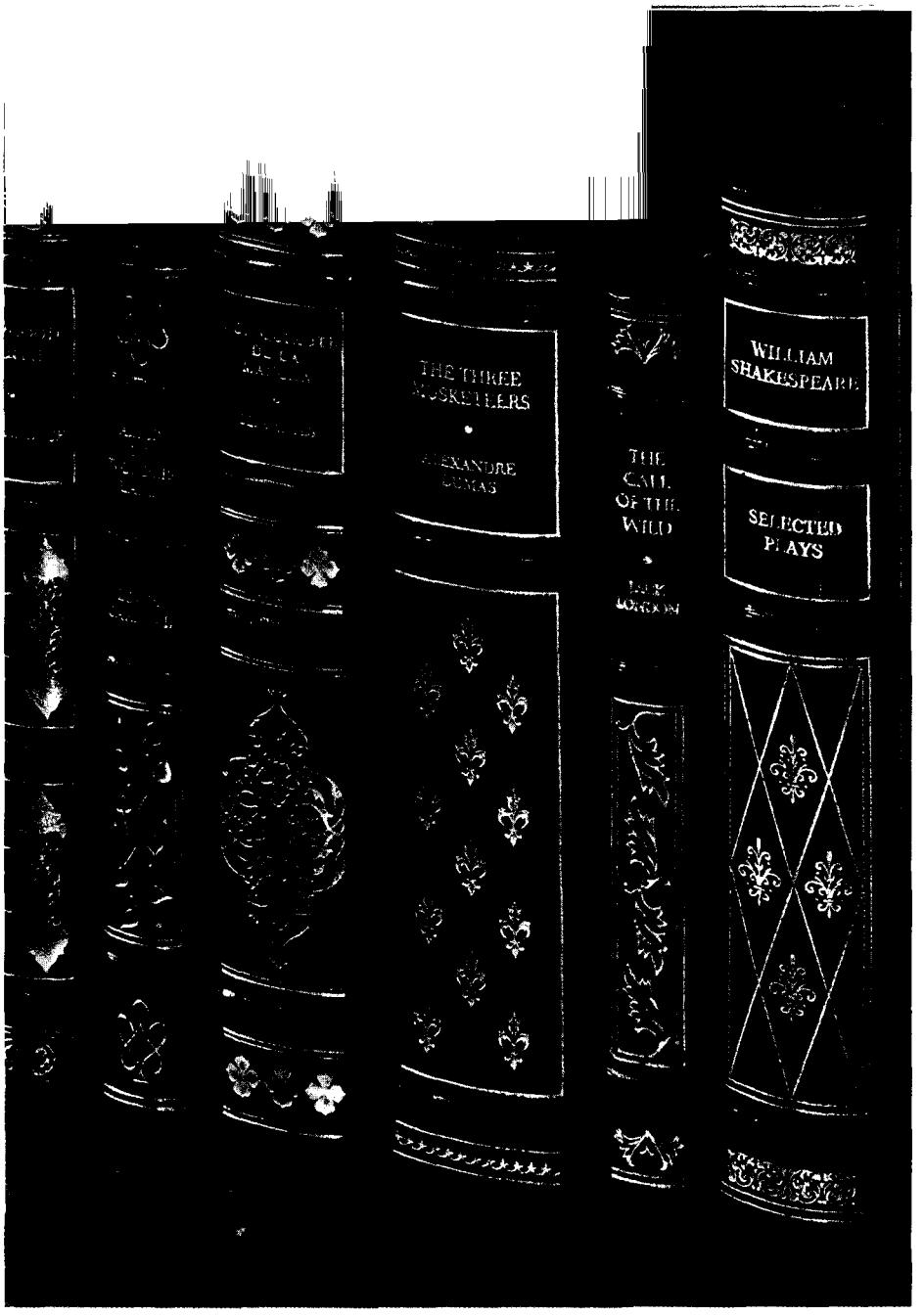

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Letters from Readers

U.S. Foreign Policy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "The Middle East: Carterism Without Carter?" [September 1981], Robert W. Tucker argues that the Reagan administration's failure to pressure the moderate Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, to accept regular American military bases shows that the administration has changed the strategic position toward the Middle East presented by Reagan during the campaign. This Mr. Tucker criticizes as a retreat to the feckless policies of Carter.

It is difficult to argue with Mr. Tucker as far as he goes. But in his analysis he fails to mention one important issue which may explain at least part of the administration's apparent change of policy. This issue has been raised frequently in the past, but the fact that it can be raised now—still, in 1981—has disturbing implications for any U.S. policy which depends on new, permanent deployments of U.S. forces abroad.

The familiar problem is, of course, national will. The American public made its sensitivity to the idea of new deployments dramatically clear very soon in the new administration in response to the President's and Secretary Haig's attempts to signal the dangers simmering in El Salvador. It appears that the intensity of the public reaction to that situation caught the administration off guard, and, in fact, its very intensity, distracting attention from the domestic economic program, is what set off the deterioration of relations between Secretary Haig and the White House staff.

One must be cautious about comparing El Salvador with the Middle East. I will limit myself here to proposing the hypothesis that the administration backed off in the Middle East because of its reading of American public opinion. Since most people agree that a successful foreign policy requires a realistic assessment of *all* national resources —emotional and psychological as well as military and economic—few people would contest the principle involved in the administration's making such a judgment, even though one might disagree with the administration's reading of the situation.

In evaluating the administration's perception, it is reasonable at the present time to suppose that the public will have little enthusiasm for committing U.S. troops to new deployments abroad except where a clear U.S. national interest is at stake *and* when there is reasonable certainty that the troops will not become embroiled in protracted combat yielding uncertain outcomes.

What is disturbing about the administration's judgment here—assuming my hypothesis is correct —is its implicit assessment that Middle East deployment would not satisfy both conditions and therefore would not command the necessary widespread support. The real questions are: if the administration feels it cannot protect its interests in the Middle East, where *could* it defend them? Under what circumstances are interests defensible? And finally: what domestic strategies or forms of leadership would guarantee public support?

These questions are important for a number of reasons. One concerns the value of all the monies the administration is committing to increase military budgets. Military credibility, after all, has two components: (1) force capability, measured in terms of men and hardware; and (2) national will, measured in terms of the willingness to deploy and engage that capability. Despite the increased spending, supported consistently by public-opinion polls, a serious question clouds the circumstances under which broad public support could be marshaled in favor of deployment of U.S. forces abroad. If we are not willing to use what we are spending money on, why do we bother? Why are we cutting entitlement programs, at enormous political cost, in order to increase our defense budget?

The questions and uncertainty that surround judgments of public will can only sustain doubts about the credibility of U.S. commitments abroad. In fact, and regrettably, it may be that the reestablishment of U.S. credibility will not occur until *after* a successful deployment of U.S. forces which results in American casualties. Merely shooting down vastly inferior Libyan planes will not do it.

The development of nuclear weapons almost certainly has worsened this situation . . . since nuclear weapons have aggravated the problem of limiting wars, at least in

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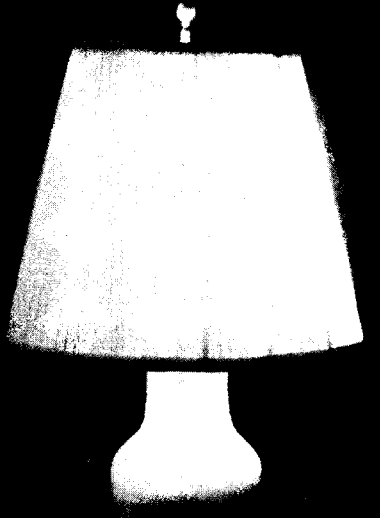

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duration. Entirely understandable fear of a nuclear exchange greatly limits opportunities to win wars decisively—and thereby end them. Limits on the scope of wars thus tend to expand their duration and make them open-ended. If the public believes that quick, decisive contests are a relic of the past and are now impossible, it is not surprising that public support for military engagements has consequently suffered. Moreover, if one considers this problem in the context of our historical isolationist instincts and tendencies, the motivation behind the administration's current Middle East policy becomes even more clear.

If the foregoing is correct, the need for a new policy of power projection becomes paramount. The key to such a policy may require effective military action that can be deployed decisively and in the national interest, thus dispelling the myth that all deployments are uncertain and open-ended.

It is not clear whether such a demonstration would be better accomplished by American or by allied forces. Using American forces alone confronts a circular dilemma: the administration might insist on increased public support as a condition of deployment. However, joint action, perhaps initiated by allies—in Central America or North Africa, for instance—could involve little actual U.S. support while nevertheless theatrically producing the necessary demonstration. It is possible that "removing a Soviet piece from the chessboard" with a preemptive action could change public attitudes toward overseas commitments of U.S. forces in a fundamental way.

There are risks, of course, which this administration, or any other, might be loath to take. Whatever the case, advocates of a stronger U.S. presence abroad would strengthen their case if they devoted more time to considering strategies and policies which accommodate the frailties which linger in the American psyche, frailties which are aggravated by a geopolitical world unavoidably obsessed with nuclear weapons.

A. Lawrence Chickering
Institute for Contemporary Studies
San Francisco, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

There is one issue in the otherwise excellent article by Robert W. Tucker that requires expansion. Mr. Tucker casts doubt on the notion that the Saudis have been price moderates within OPEC due to affection for the United States. He states: "What is abundantly clear is that the Saudis have acted in terms of their own perceived interests and that these interests have for the time being roughly coincided with Western interests as well."

It is essential to state clearly why it is that Saudi self-interest dictates a preference for prices lower than those advocated by other OPEC states. It is not because the Saudis don't know what to do with so much money, or prefer investment in the capital markets, or fear Western military intervention if prices rise too much. These are the sorts of explanations often tossed about, but they have no basis.

The Saudis and their client states (United Arab Emirates, Kuwait) are price moderates within OPEC because optimal prices for the Saudis are lower than optimal prices for the other OPEC countries. When OPEC prices rise, some producers must reduce output, because consumers will purchase less petroleum. If no producer cut output, the market would be flooded and prices would fall. Primary responsibility for preventing this falls on the Saudis, who are by far the largest OPEC producer, and on their satellites.

In effect the Saudis sacrifice output in order to maintain higher prices. The other OPEC countries then may enjoy the higher prices without sacrifice; indeed, they may expand production somewhat. Since each increase in price requires increased Saudi sacrifice, the Saudis reach their preferred price long before the other OPEC countries. The Saudis are the engineers of OPEC. And like all engineers, they occasionally make errors. When Iranian-Iraqi oil production resumed, the market experienced a temporary glut at the Saudi-established set of prices. (For a more detailed analysis, see my article, "What is OPEC?," in *Challenge*, forthcoming.)

In short, the economic self-interest of the Saudis dictates price "moderation." Moreover, as Mr. Tucker points out, there has never been a single act by the Saudis, except for their "moderation" within OPEC, that could be construed as moderate or pro-Western. Scratch a State Department Arabist, and you will find a man whose evidence of Saudi moderation is Saudi oil-pricing policy. He will ignore the fact that Saudi Arabia engineered the tenfold increase in world oil prices in the first place, and is moderate in its pricing policy only when compared with other OPEC members. In the same way, Brezhnev is a "moderate" when compared with some other Soviet leaders.

Since Saudi "price moderation" is a direct result of the Saudi role within OPEC, no Western bribery, as in the form of AWACS, is necessary. Nor need the West fear exerting pressure on the Saudis or attempting to destabilize the cartel itself.

Steven E. Plaut
Technion
Haifa, Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . The reason for the Reagan administration's sedulous courtship of Saudi Arabia is not only that the Saudis have been "credited with engineering the oil glut," as Robert W. Tucker states, but that they possess an immense, centralized pool of wealth which constitutes a market for American goods and services.

Every year Saudi Arabia's royal family awards huge, highly profitable contracts to large American corporations with influence in Washington. Bechtel, for example, does lucrative work for Saudi Arabia; Secretary of Defense Weinberger was Bechtel's General Counsel before coming to Washington.

For years American politicians and businessmen have cultivated close ties with the Saudi royal family because it is enormously convenient to have this market for our products, which can be so easily tapped by use of "contacts" and "special relationships," rather than facing the vagaries of the ordinary competitive market system. If money remains in the pocket of the American consumer, American businesses must compete to get it; but when that money flows to Saudi Arabia, it can be conveniently extracted and rechanneled by companies who have cultivated relationships with the royal family of Saudi Arabia. . . .

The average American citizen should be most wary of this situation. While it is advantageous for certain giant corporations to tap the Saudi market, the American consumer and taxpayer could well question whether he has benefited

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by the flow of American money to pay Saudi oil bills, money which is subsequently wasted on extravagant construction or military projects similar to those that went down the drain in the Shah's Iran. . . .

JOEL M. MARTEL
New York Law School
New York City

Juvenile Delinquents

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Susan Seidner Adler's article ["Bribing Delinquents to be Good," October 1981] accurate in many respects. Her criticism of family courts, however, is misdirected. She states that it is clear that only a psychopath will be jailed by the courts, though in fact this is not the fault of the courts but of the legislatures. Until recently, most legislatures severely limited the penalties allotted to delinquents. The courts simply have lacked the authority to do what Mrs. Adler wants them to do.

Mrs. Adler also fails to distinguish between delinquent and neglected children. Delinquent children have violated the law and are often a threat to the public. Neglected children are those whose parents have failed to provide a proper home. Many of these children are infants or extremely young. Not only are these children not criminals, they are often the victims of crimes such as incest and child-battering. While violent children ought to be punished, children whose only fault is that they have careless parents should not also be penalized.

DAVID E. MANDELL
Norwich, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If someone were to believe the dubious dictum of Pascal quoted by Susan Seidner Adler that the "first moral obligation is to think clearly," he would have to conclude that Mrs. Adler is in very serious trouble indeed. It is impossible to imagine what theoretical framework could possibly provide her with criteria for distinguishing among delinquent, sociopathic, psychopathic, emotionally troubled, dependent-neglected, or anti-social children; thus her assertion that "anti-social children now make up the majority of [the agencies'] population," and that the *agencies* have "defined their populations incorrectly," defies meaning.

Her theory that anti-social behavior is really only the repudiation of middle-class white values seems to be predicated on a condensation of the old Freudian pleasure principle with some vaguely 60's-ish Marxist ideas about the "establishment" and "middle-class values." Defiant, or sociopathic, or delinquent, or anti-social behavior simply offers more rewards! She asserts that such children are not "sick" and that "they" understand commonly held standards of right and wrong.

The problem which Mrs. Adler reacts to, but only dimly apprehends, is the problem of what to do with that segment of the population, not confined to children, who do not understand that they ought to behave in any particular way. To imagine, as Mrs. Adler does, that this can be "imparted" by enforcing the law denies the essential difference between the person who can choose not to do what he wants to do, or to do what he does not want to do, and so is free and morally responsible, and the person who merely learns to accommodate to what is least painful and most pleasurable. Moreover, it flies in the face of what is known of the origin and development of the sociopath. Such people lack the agency of the mind which enables a normal person to pass judgment, on himself or others. The only agency which mediates between the wish and the act is pragmatic and utilitarian.

It is, of course, absurd to imagine that there is a unitary explanation for anti-social behavior, let alone the gamut of deviant behavior lumped together by Mrs. Adler. Not all such behavior is sociopathic, neurotic, or a manifestation of class warfare. Not only Mrs. Adler but society as a whole seems unable to face the calamitous reality that the sociopath cannot be responsible, precisely because his sociopathy consists explicitly in his inability to be responsible. I worked for many years as a psychiatrist before I finally understood that although the sociopath may understand that he will be punished for certain things, he does not have the slightest intimation that there is something other than this called a moral judgment.

Admittedly, we do not have very good techniques for distinguishing between the amoral and the immoral. Some, like those who work in agencies, are overcome with guilt at the idea of punishing those who are amoral. Some, like Mrs. Adler and perhaps most of society, feel that the crime does not reside in the heart of the criminal, but in whatever is "not in society's best interest." . . . The complexities of "treating," or caring for, or coping with delinquents deserve more than this, and more than is understood or proposed by Mrs. Adler.

[Dr.] HAL J. BREEN
Phoenix, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her article on New York's juvenile-delinquent program, Susan Seidner Adler has done a breathtaking job of snatching reality from labyrinthine confusion. . . . Mrs. Adler's final advice is to put "the best interest of society" ahead of the best interest of the anti-social child. Sound advice! But it is undermined, it seems, by an earlier observation that "Delinquent children . . . owe society one thing and one thing only—tolerable behavior." I suspect it would be impossible to persuade the social worker that he should give up working for the child's personal development, and substitute the goal of tolerable social behavior.

What might be more persuasive is to point out to the social workers that, in America, there is no real contrast between tolerable social behavior and individual self-development. Ever since the Declaration of Independence, tolerable social behavior has demanded the exercise of natural rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If these are not vain rights, they imply self-reliance and self-development as prerequisites to meaningful choices. . . .

Just as the family prepares children to fulfill themselves in adult life by training them in childhood to have self-discipline (deferred gratification) and other qualities of character, so the social worker must encourage these qualities among the children for whom the families have failed. He must, at least, encourage that minimum of self-control which makes the pursuit of happiness a real possibility.

Actually, the situation is ironic. Mrs. Adler suggests that social workers have set their obligations aside. What really appears to have happened, however, is that they have taken their obligations to society altogether too seriously—except that their "society" is a new invention. It is not the traditional

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one of the Declaration. In attempting to develop acceptable "behavior patterns" rather than the necessary inner character traits, the social workers have adopted the most "advanced" modern theories of education—theories that now dominate pedagogy from grammar school to the prison-rehabilitation program. These theories lose sight of, or more properly, never see the individual and his dignity. They socialize him by means of strategically located role models, never asking whether the model satisfies his individual talents and moral nature. . . .

DAVID D. BROYLES
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Why do child-care workers think they must bribe children? Susan Seidner Adler is on target when she observes the peculiar social-work attitude which so simplistically and absurdly perceives the root of evil in a child as caused by deprivation whose reversal will eliminate the evil.

No such cause and effect exists. Careful studies in Britain posed the very pertinent question: why don't all children from culturally and economically deprived neighborhoods go bad? . . . The answer was clear: children went "bad" when they were not held accountable for their actions, their time, their behavior. The real indicators of potential problems were not race, single-parent families, class, or levels of parental education, but the extent to which existing parental figures—including the school—expressed their care for children through some clearly communicated, . . . consistently applied code of behavior whose breach would be punished. Discipline is a form of caring. It is that simple. . . .

Last year, the directors of an institution almost certainly on Mrs. Adler's list visited Elan, the facility for delinquent adolescents of which I am director. They saw—and very much appreciated—a diametrically different philosophy and methodology of treatment. A facility where there was no violence and no drug traffic, where character (not just behavior) was expected to change and did change. It delighted them, and they said so. These are sophisticated, intelligent, highly competent people, not the fools Mrs. Adler makes them out to be. But they regretfully also said that changing things was impossible for them. The New York State bureaucracy would never permit it. How *did* we manage at Elan? . . .

The Juvenile Justice Act . . . is largely behind the mess described by Mrs. Adler. It mandates the treatment of juveniles according to arbitrary, irrelevant legal categories rather than medical or psychological problems. Adjudicated delinquents are to be segregated from others (status offenders, the dependent, the neglected, etc., etc.) and hence treated differently. In other words, adolescents are to be treated according to what a defective, overworked, overburdened court system thinks they did, rather than according to what the problem actually is. . . .

Adjudicated delinquents are to be segregated. They really are on a one-way rail to jail. The others are to get different treatment. As with all excessively punitive laws, we try to evade them. Every decent person in the system tries to avoid the adjudication process. The truly dangerous criminal youth is by law lumped together with (1) the loser who was dumb enough to get caught; or (2) the child who wanted to get caught as a cry for help; or (3) the juvenile whose family can't afford a lawyer; or (4) the child who comes from the wrong side of the tracks, etc., etc. That is why Mrs. Adler's institutions have this frightening, untreatable mixture of the dangerous with the unfortunate, the troubled, the crazy; and with a lot of healthy aggressive children, too. That's why that ridiculous term "emotionally disturbed" was invented and why it is used so assiduously.

What is "emotionally disturbed" in the real world? About 10-12 percent (I'm guessing, but after lots of experience) are psychotic, i.e., have disordered thoughts, are crazy, and suffer from schizophrenic disease. Another 10 percent are criminally sociopathic. We do not know yet how to treat these groups and cannot always recognize them clearly. The rest are treatable. . . .

At Elan, we know that a psychotic or a criminal adolescent eats up all our energy, and deprives the treatable of their just share: we cannot mix them with the others. So we do not accept them. But Mrs. Adler's institutions do. They take them all. . . . Dealing with another sector of adolescent care—the high school—Edward A. Wynne has also placed the blame squarely on what I, too, perceive to be the villain: the courts and lawyers. In recent years a whole series of laws, attitudes, and judicial judgments have been created which have led our society—and most certainly our contentious youth—to perceive youngsters as adults with a full range of civil rights which need to be actively protected from . . . infringement by adults in authority. Schools and child-care agencies have been forced into a defensive posture by self-styled advocates who apply the most rigid rulings of civil rights and who assume the malevolence of the institutions toward the child. All authority is seen as evil by these people. . . .

Schools and other public and publicly-assisted (and therefore publicly legislated) institutions have been left without their communal or authoritative functions: the care implied by the concept *in loco parentis* has been replaced by legalistic intervention by an uncaring party. I have yet to see a child-advocate lawyer take responsibility for a child's care after rendering an institution powerless to do so in court. Wynne points out the result: "Educators. . . . have abdicated their parental duties and have become mere custodians." Custodians can only hope for limited, short-term effectiveness, and bribery is the easiest way to achieve their goal. . . .

In the long run, the legalistic interpretation, and the irresponsible interventions performed in its name, are removing more and more options for the care of disturbed children. Since I co-founded Elan as a residential psychiatric-care facility eleven years ago, we have prided ourselves on providing the highest quality care to a wide spectrum of adolescents, including those referred to us by public and quasi-public agencies. We play no games about defining success: success is a graduate who does not reenter the criminal-justice system, who completes a realistic level of education, and who becomes self-supporting. Our rate has been as phenomenally high as is the recidivism rate of state institutions.

But no longer. We simply cannot provide quality care while fighting the de-facto malevolent forces of child-right advocates in the twenty-five or more states we serve. Our doors are now open to privately-funded residents only. We, at least,

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Soviet Military Power

Some scraggly bands are given to pooh-poohing the Soviet threat. They seem to view the Kremlin's denizens as little more than a bunch of burly teddy bears of mildly mischievous bent. Well, those folks can draw little comfort from a new report issued by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Entitled *Soviet Military Power,* the report is a distillation of briefings given to the defense ministers of NATO countries. In 100 pages of facts, figures, charts, maps, and pictures, it details the relentless buildup of military might being pursued by the Soviet Union. It tells of an unstanched flow from Soviet production plants of new weapons systems, tanks, missiles, artillery, ships and aircraft.

Even as Russia's domestic economy sputters and stumbles and the Russian people struggle against denial and deprivation, the Kremlin pumps vast sums into its military machine. This money is funding a massive buildup of forces, the projection of Soviet power far from Soviet boundaries, and the use of proxy forces to support revolutionary factions and conflicts. It all adds up to a mounting threat to international stability.

The Pentagon report notes that the Soviet armed forces now number more than 4.8 million men. A total of 180 divisions —motorized rifle, tank, airborne—are stationed in Eastern Europe, the U.S.S.R., and Mongolia, and are in combat in Afghanistan. The Soviets have 50,000 tanks and 20,000 artillery pieces in the field.

In Eastern Europe alone, there are more than 3,500 Soviet and Warsaw Pact tactical bombers and fighters. In each of the last eight years, the Soviets have built more than 1,000 fighters—many times the U.S. output.

They have eight classes of submarines and eight classes of major surface warships currently under construction. And they are constantly adding to their nuclear warheads deliverable against Western Europe, China, and Japan.

Soviet military production capacity is awesome. It consists of 135 major military industrial plants totaling some 10,000 acres of floor space—a 34% increase over the last decade. In 1980 these plants produced more than 150 different types of weapons systems.

What's especially troubling is the rapidity with which the Soviet Union is forging ahead in technology—the foundation of know-how that spawns military capability. Technologically, the U.S. is still out front. But the Soviets are narrowing the gap. During the 1970s, they dramatically reduced America's lead "in virtually every important basic technology," the Pentagon says. They are now believed to be ahead in some advanced spheres, such as high-power lasers.

In the report's preface, Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger points out that a clear understanding of Soviet armed forces, their doctrine, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses "is essential to the shaping and maintenance of effective U.S. and allied armed forces."

With clarity and force, *Soviet Military Power* contributes to that understanding. Copies of the report are obtainable, at $6.50 each, from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

UNITED TECHNOLOGIES

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care not to be caretakers. We insist on the role of real healer.

[DR.] GERALD E. DAVIDSON
Elan One
Poland Spring, Maine

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Susan Seidner Adler's basic argument is that juvenile delinquents should be punished because respect for the law is our most fundamental need. . . . Treatment ideals are wrong in Mrs. Adler's view because "they [delinquents] owe society one thing and one thing only—tolerable behavior. . . . Society has no right to infer what is in *their* best interest" (emphasis added). And she concludes: "It is the courts' proper function to enforce the law in the best interest of society." . . .

It is this last statement we should look at first. The courts, when not just simply overwhelmed, think it is in the interest of society to offer treatment to these children. What do we the public think? Of course I appreciate Mrs. Adler's potential outrage should her purse be snatched, and her probable sentiment that "we should get these offenders off the street." I feel the same way. But society's interest must be broader than this. Is it not true that, besides wishing to stop juvenile offenses, we want these children to grow up self-supporting so they won't go on welfare? To become adequate parents so they don't produce another generation of messes? To prevent the increase of our adult jail population? Don't we want to reestablish stability in those sections of society that are disintegrating? An informed public needs to have these larger goals or face the prospect of an ever-increasing crime rate.

By narrowing her goals, Mrs. Adler short-sightedly indulges in only one emotion, *moral outrage*, and in a need for reinstituting punishment as *the* form of rehabilitation. Why has punishment receded in our approaches to juvenile delinquency? Mrs. Adler gives us no clue. It is true that this is partly due to a general social philosophy, but only partly. More important is that it has been tried and it does not work. Mrs. Adler sneers at the treatment approaches she investigated because they have no criteria for success. But we do have criteria for success in punishment and jailing—recidivism rates which are so high that we have given up thinking of jails as rehabilitative institutions. In fact it is generally accepted that jails are no more than schools for crime and that they turn out embittered, hardened criminals. . . .

Now it is true that the treatment forms Mrs. Adler describes, if indeed she describes them correctly, do not work. They are based on the theory of positive reinforcement of proper behavior by rewards and the "obliteration" of negative behavior by ignoring it. They are the precise opposite of punishment theories. And they don't work because human beings are more complex and cynical than rats and because the children get reinforcement from their peer group and don't care very much about the rewards offered them for good behavior. . . .

But Mrs. Adler did not bother to find out whether all residential treatment centers in this country have similar attitudes (and I doubt that all the centers she visited were as limited as she states). My work as a consultant to treatment centers in Pennsylvania has led me into very different approaches to the treatment of PINS, DN's, and delinquent children.

Our basic theory is that these children suffer from such poor parenting and traumatic backgrounds that they are in deep pain, which is intolerable. Whenever they get an inkling of this pain—for example, a bad mood, depression, despair, loneliness, a sense of being nothing—whenever this happens, it leads to instant denial of this emotion and the realities which produce it. Instead, the children turn to having "fun" and this "fun" has to be antisocial because it is also a protest against the offending parent. These "fun" actions, this warding off of bad feelings, we call *acting out*. It makes no difference whether the "fun" is drugs or sex or purse snatching and worse crimes. That is why, though Mrs. Adler makes a big point about merging categories, we see no difference among DN's, PINS, and delinquents. They all act out through denial.

At the same time *acting out* can have another component, that is, the acting out of a conscious or unconscious fantasy which is meant to fulfill wishes and dreams. Examples of such fantasies are: "If I steal this car I will be a man (something I doubt the rest of the time)," or "if I become a prostitute I will get an everloving earth-mother-sugar-daddy (in the form of my pimp)." And often, too, the acting out is to fulfill the unconscious fantasy of a parent whose love is needed. . . .

Our treatment approach is the same for all these acting-out children. We first concentrate on getting the child in touch with his pain. Only after he can do this do we concentrate on getting him to own up to the irresponsibility of his behavior and the paybacks at his parents which are involved. Then we examine with the child whether this behavior is really so much "fun." At the same time, in family conferences, the child confronts the parent with his hurts and the parents do the same, and often, if there is a capacity for love between them, it is finally expressed for the first time, at least the first time in many years.

When we are successful in inducing these steps we generaly have changes in outward behavior and a readiness to try new outlets. This type of treatment works best where the angry and despairing parents are sufficiently flexible to become involved. Treatment of delinquents who have been in jail or have become too hardened by life is more difficult because we usually have no parental involvement and because the denial of pain in these youths has become so much more stubborn. The sense of "fun" or defense of their way of life is then often used to deny the sense of failure and the anxiety as to whether they are a real "man" or "woman." Success is usually only possible when "street life" itself has become unbearably frightening.

In fact, it is time to look at Mrs. Adler's views of street life in the black ghetto.

Mrs. Adler writes: "While I continually heard about the harmful effects of life on the street no one mentioned its lures, thrills, and adventures, or the positive side of delinquency and neglect: easy money, easy sex, and the freedom to do as you please. In fact in many if not most respects the life of a typical black, lower-class delinquent is an adolescent dream . . . it is the well-behaved middle-class teenager who is clearly deprived. This may be so simple that only a child can understand it."

Mrs. Adler is truly naive. Has she talked to delinquent children, heard about their constant sense of fright and anxiety on the street, the true dangers, the feeling of loneliness that comes with all that wonderful

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sexual freedom, the constant fear of losing one's partner or that one is just a sex object being used, the feeling of self-disgust, the yearnings to "make something" of oneself, to be something "respectable," the terrible isolation from one's family, the loss and loneliness that no one will care for you if you drop your front?

Can she compare this to the child who plays basketball or participates in a school play or feels the thrill of joining a political movement—the child who looks with pride to a great future, who feels no self-hatred? Does she really believe that middle-class children have no sex life? What ordinary children have is productive fun and their parents' love.

Furthermore, Mrs. Adler has not the vaguest conception of the terrible deprivations these children have undergone. Not material deprivation. Here I agree with her. All over the world, and right here in America, there are children more deprived than many delinquents. Poverty, *per se*, is not the explanation of delinquency. The problem is not caused by poverty but by disorganized families who lack any cultural concept of child-rearing, and above all by families with parents so young they are little more than children themselves. These families—with their desertions, foster placements and institutionalizations, passing children around, cruelty, mental illness, drinking, beatings, incest, their demand that the little child be the parent—produce the worst delinquents. Words fail to describe what the children born to these families have to endure. No, the middle-class child is seldom treated like this.

Finally, Mrs. Adler falls into the trap of black rhetoric of the 60's: ". . . anti-social behavior has definite advantages for lower-class children in terms of the values that define their own way of life . . . it is simply anti-middle class, anti-white, and most often both." "Middle-class values are, almost by definition, in conflict with their own." What are these middle-class values that the black ghetto eschews? Wanting money, security, a sense of achievement, or wanting not to be a victim of crime? Wanting a good job that pays a lot of money and has prestige? Wanting to be married and be a good parent? But if you talk to these children you find that is exactly what they want! What they lack is the psychological means to reach their goals. The stick-to-itiveness in face of failure—that is what is meant by low frustration tolerance. There is only one section of society which scorns these values, the very affluent youngster who takes advantages for granted.

Rather than return to the ineffective punishment method, we need more attempts to devise proper treatment methods and much earlier interventions into the lives of children at risk. . . . What we need is an informed public which understands the problem and can help come up with programs that will have an effect. What we do not need is rhetoric about white middle-class values, the uselessness of educational goals, and the denial of the real suffering that exists.

[Dr.] Lore Reich Rubin
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

To the Editor of Commentary:

Susan Seidner Adler's article is splendid. But juvenile-detention homes don't have a monopoly on moral mindlessness—it's as contagious as the flu.

Marian Del Vecchio
Belmont, Massachusetts

Susan Seidner Adler writes:

David E. Mandell quite correctly points out that the laws in most states have changed only recently to take account of the more serious young offenders. But he misses the essential point: laws make little difference if they are not enforced. The courts do not so much lack authority as judges lack the will to assert the authority that they have. Thus in New York State the effect of the 1978 juvenile-offender law allowing serious delinquents to be tried in adult courts has been negligible. To give an example: during the first two years that the law took effect, 2,489 children were arrested in New York City for alleged murder, robbery, arson, rape, assault, and other serious crimes, but only 4 percent received longer sentences than they would have received before the law was passed, while the vast majority had their cases dismissed or sent back to Family Court. The disposition of a case finally depends more on the attitude of the individual judge than on the law that is on the books, and it is a well-known fact that harassed adult-court judges tend to treat a youthful criminal even more leniently than do their counterparts in Family Court.

In view of my emphasis, I do not see how Mr. Mandell could fail to understand that "neglected" is a euphemism when applied to children in residential treatment centers, which cater only to children with severe behavioral problems. Neglected and abused children are cared for in foster homes or in community-based group homes.

I can appreciate the fact that Hal J. Breen's sensibilities are offended by the deplorable child-care jargon, but I am sorry that he sees no way to distinguish between a sociopathic child and a neglected one. I am surprised that he has trouble with the term anti-social. I thought it a fairly good term for those children who are considered so troublesome that they have to be isolated, but perhaps he can think of a better word. I never said, nor do I believe, that middle-class values are white. I did say that many delinquents are anti-middle class as well as anti-white. Nor did I suggest that proper behavior can be imparted by enforcing the law, but I did say that law-abiding behavior is encouraged by enforcing the law.

The children in these centers, as I made quite clear, are delinquent and only rarely sociopathic, so that they can be held responsible for their actions. It may trouble Dr. Breen to learn that the workers I encountered in the agencies, though humane, were not "overcome with guilt at the idea of punishing those who are amoral." He seems to regret that some, like me, "feel that the crime does not reside in the heart of the criminal, but in whatever is not in society's best interest." Does he feel that the crime resides in the heart of the criminal and *is* in society's best interest? I am lost.

In reply to David D. Broyles: I too think it would be impossible to persuade the average social worker of what most of us know: that behavior is not only the natural expression of character, but precisely the problem that they have been assigned (and paid) to correct.

It was good to hear this affirmed by the director of at least one agency, Gerald E. Davidson, whose thoughts on treatment and the effects of legal safeguards for children are sane. It was disappointing to hear him too equate decency with avoiding what he calls excessively punitive laws. Why is jail excessively punitive for the minority of hard-core young criminals who are adjudicated offenders? The justice system that Dr. Davidson rightly

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finds responsible for many of our juvenile problems, is not working precisely because most judges share his notion of decency. Furthermore, the truly dangerous criminal is not lumped together by law with the "loser who was dumb enough to get caught . . . the child who wanted to get caught as a cry for help . . . the juvenile whose family can't afford a lawyer . . . the child who comes from the wrong side of the tracks." The truly dangerous criminal is thrown together with milder delin quents precisely because the law is being disregarded.

And that is why, as Dr. Davidson says, "institutions have this frightening, untreatable mixture of the dangerous, with the unfortunate, the troubled, the crazy; and with a lot of healthy aggressive children, too" (though by the time a child's aggressiveness gets him institutionalized, it is not, by any definition, "healthy"). The residential treatment centers I visited, which were all private voluntary agencies, certainly did not "take them all," as Dr. Davidson says. Far from it. As the director of a state agency complained to me, the private agencies "take the cream and leave the rest here." And one minor cavil: I never made out the directors of the agencies that I met to be fools. The judgment is Dr. Davidson's.

Nothing I could say could stop the Lore Reich Rubins of the world from continuing to brood over whether or not the mugger has an inkling of the intolerable psychic pain he is inflicting on himself while he brutalizes someone else. But I do want to thank Dr. Reich Rubin for so unerringly illustrating every point I was trying to make.

Jesus & the Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hillel Halkin, in his review of my book, *Revolution in Judea* [Books in Review, September 1981], asserts that because the Gospels underwent "basic editing" it is impossible to arrive at any reliable conclusions about the historical Jesus. This is to overlook the fact that our knowledge of *every* figure of the ancient world depends on texts that require critical sifting. In the case of Jesus, we are lucky enough to have four documents which, by supplementing and contradicting each other, give grounds for scientific investigations and conclusions. We also have a wealth of documentation, by which background details can be checked, in Josephus, Philo, the Talmud, and Roman authors.

Mr. Halkin fails to understand the methods of textual criticism of the Gospels used in my book and in other works of the historical school. These methods are not arbitrary, as he supposes. When faced with contradictions in the texts, one asks, "Which is the earlier, more authentic version?," and the answer must be one that can explain how the later version came to be added. Thus, the question of Jesus' alleged pacifism (adduced by Mr. Halkin as insoluble) demands an explanation of passages in which Jesus is shown as the reverse of a pacifist, e.g., his forcible expulsion of the money-changers. The principle used is the well-tried one, *lectio difficilis melior*, i.e., the passage that goes against the grain of the narrative, or contradicts its general *Tendenz*, is likely to be a survival of the under-

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lying earlier version, for it could not have been added at a late stage when the *Tendenz* was fully established.

Mr. Halkin's naive question as to how censorship could have allowed "incriminating passages [to] pass," shows great faith in the competence of censors. Even in modern works, censorship is always imperfect: for example, a future historian would be able to reconstruct the importance of Trotsky in the Russian Revolution even from textbooks in which that importance has been censored out. If the historian had a series of four Soviet textbooks of different dates in which the process of censorship could be observed progressively, the reconstruction would be much easier; and this is exactly the situation in regard to the four Gospels (Mr. Halkin does not even mention the methodological importance in my book of the order in which the Gospels were written). When, further, the myth of Jesus' pacifism is given its historical explanation (the desire of the Gospel writers to avoid political conflict with Rome and to dissociate themselves from militant Jewish nationalism), the argument is complete, for *all* the text and its process of development has been explained, not just the parts selected as early and authentic.

These methods, especially when confirmed by technical documentary analysis, can attain a high level of probability. Mr. Halkin's approach, however, leaves contradictions altogether unexplained and inexplicable. He also gives a crude account of the process of censorship, when he supposes it to be the conscious perpetration of "blatant fictions." As I explain, the process is much more likely to have been unconscious.

Mr. Halkin refers to what he calls the "Carmichael-Brandon-Maccoby" hypothesis, and wonders why I do not give more acknowledgment to the first two names in this designation. This shows considerable ignorance of the literature of the subject. The view that Jesus had no intention of founding a new religion and that his claim to be the messiah had an anti-Roman political aspect has been held by hundreds of authors. Moreover, Mr. Halkin is wrong in thinking that the Jewish Jesus is a "modern enterprise" and "Christian scholars began it," for a similar approach can be found in medieval Jewish authors, notably Profiat Duran and Hasdai Crescas. The whole line of thought dates from the time when Jewish scholars began to study the New Testament seriously, and found that it conflicted with the official Church interpretation of Jesus' intentions.

It is true that S.G.F. Brandon and my good friend Joel Carmichael (to whom I *do* refer in the book) and myself and many others all belong to an established school of thought that contrasts the historical Jesus with the Jesus of the Christian myth. While there are many vital matters on which we are agreed, there are also important differences among us. For example, unlike Carmichael and Robert Eisler (and before them, H. Rodrigues and M. Fluegel), I do *not* argue (despite Mr. Halkin's misrepresentation) that Jesus was a Zealot. I see no evidence of realistic military planning or activity on Jesus' part; I see him, rather, as a figure similar to Theudas, i.e., an apocalyptic messianic claimant who expected that a God-given miracle (on the Mount of Olives, in accordance with biblical prophecy) would overwhelm the Romans, accompanied by only token fighting by himself and his followers. This answers Mr. Halkin's objection that the Romans do not seem to have taken Jesus' rising very seriously; as I explain in my book, a disturbance by an excited mob would either die down quickly or could be quelled by the removal of the charismatic figure at its center, as in the case of Theudas described by Josephus. Jesus *is* mentioned by Josephus, contrary to Mr. Halkin's assertion, though the passage has been much tampered with by Christian editors.

Brandon, to whom I make frequent reference in my book, also sees Jesus as a Theudas-figure, but he does not stress, as I do, Jesus' kingship, and thus interprets incidents such as the Transfiguration and the Triumphal Entry very differently. Ideologically, moreover, Brandon and I are poles apart. Brandon, following Rudolf Bultmann, regards the historical Jesus as entirely lacking the theological significance of the mythical Jesus based on Hellenistic mystery-religion. While this releases Brandon to consider the historical Jesus objectively, it blinds him to the religious value of Jewish messianism, which comprises a fusion of religion and politics that the modern "liberation theology" is seeking to recover. The theological aspect of my book is dismissed by Mr. Halkin in a phrase about the "apologetic character" of my defense of the Pharisees. But my whole point is that the "political Jesus" is not, as Christians think, smaller than the otherworldly Jesus, but greater; and the Jewish concept of the messiah is superior to that of Christianity, which delivers this world into the hands of tyranny and injustice.

It is in this light that my view of the Barabbas incident should be regarded. Mr. Halkin's comment that it is "cleverly original, if not necessarily convincing" is quite inadequate to the scope of my intention, which was not merely to propose an ingenious solution to a problem. From the literary standpoint, the Barabbas incident is the center of the Gospel story, encapsulating the theme of Jewish political-minded worldliness versus Christian "spiritual" otherworldliness. The contrast reaches its height in the Jewish choice of the "robber" Barabbas in preference to Jesus the otherworldly pacifist. My argument, beginning with the fact that Barabbas' name is given in early manuscripts as "Jesus Barabbas," and that there is no previous or later mention of him either in the Gospels or elsewhere, is that Jesus and Barabbas were originally the same person ("Barabbas" being a *title*, equivalent to "Son of the Father"), but were split off and given separate identities in order to detach Jesus from his political aims and his Jewish affiliation. The Jewish crowd, who actually shouted for Jesus' release, was then represented as supporting the wrong Jesus, and was therefore saddled with the guilt of the death of the true Jesus. I added that "even if one regards Barabbas as a separate historical personage . . . [he] has been the receptacle into which the unwanted characteristics of Jesus have been dumped." Barabbas was thus the steppingstone by which Jesus was transformed from a Jewish messiah, destroyed in political conflict with Rome, into a cosmic Christ, destroyed by the Jews in their mythical role as accursed performers of the sacrificial murder which was indispensable for salvation. This transformation has provided the driving-force for anti-Semitism throughout the Christian era.

It is an urgent task to uncover the facts underlying the myth. The work has made good progress at the

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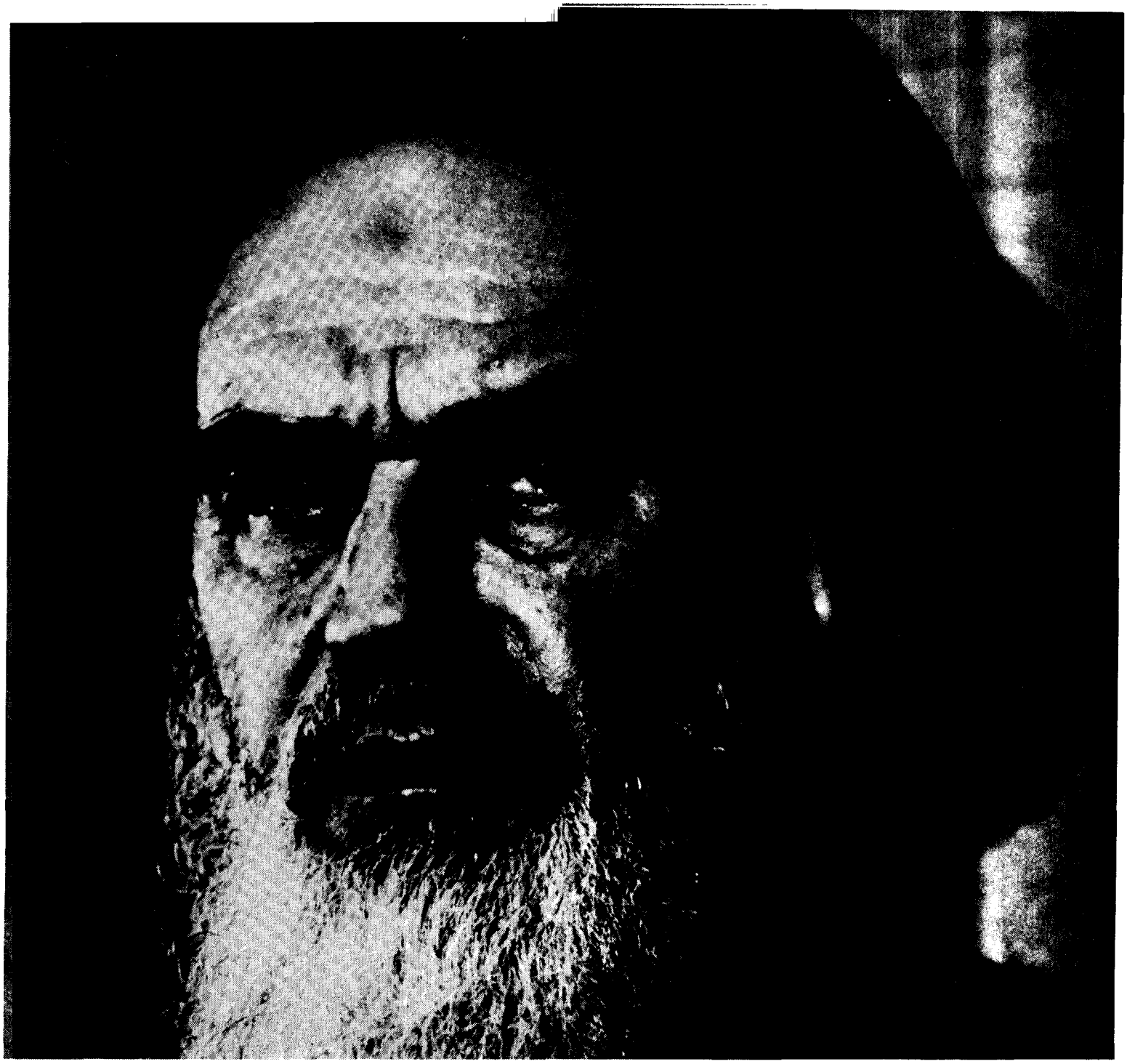

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hands of many able investigators, despite the inevitable objections of those who like to put foward ill-informed theories about the *a priori* impossibility of the task. . . .

HYAM MACCOBY
London, England

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Although I confessed in my review that, unlike Hyam Maccoby, I am a layman when it comes to New Testament scholarship, I do not think that it is beyond my powers to comprehend "the methods of textual criticism of the Gospels used in [Maccoby's] book and in other works of the historical school." Indeed, if anyone is methodologically confused, I am afraid that it is Mr. Maccoby himself.

Of course, as Mr. Maccoby says, "our knowledge of *every* figure of the ancient world depends on texts that require critical sifting"—which is why, sift though we may, such knowledge remains inevitably tenuous, especially when the texts in question are mainly or exclusively religious ones whose purpose is to exalt and mythicize their subject. In this respect, Jesus is not the exception but the rule. What, in the final analysis, is or can be definitely known about the lives and thoughts of the historical Abraham, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, or Buddha? No doubt, careful textual analysis, when correlated with the findings of history and archeology, can help us to form rational hypotheses about such men, to compare these with other hypotheses, and to evaluate the probability of their being right or wrong—in other words, to make educated guesses, which is exactly what Mr. Maccoby has done. But no matter how educated such guesses are, they are far from being "reliable conclusions," as is demonstrated in the case of Jesus by the current state of New Testament criticism, whose practitioners, after over a century of arduous labors, still disagree on most major issues.

To get down to a number of specific points raised by Mr. Maccoby:

1. I, at least, would have to have great faith in the competence of early Christian "censors" to believe that within the space of several decades they could have successfully managed to efface the real Jesus and to substitute their own double in his place. Nor do I see how such a process, if it in fact occurred, could have been an unconscious one. If Mr. Maccoby is right about Jesus having led an anti-Roman uprising in Jerusalem, there must still have been living, at the time the synoptic Gospels were composed, many hundreds, if not thousands, of Palestinian Jews who were eyewitnesses to the event—at least some of whom would have sought to make known their recollections of it as members of the Jerusalem Nazarene church. According to Mr. Maccoby, either the authors of the Gospels were unaware that such eyewitness reports existed, or else, being aware of them, they conveniently "forgot" them and "unconsciously" replaced them with an imaginary account of their own. Neither of these two alternatives strikes me as being particularly likely.

2. I am cognizant of the fact that Jesus is mentioned by Josephus. Had Mr. Maccoby read my review with more care, he would have realized that the question asked in it is not, Why is Jesus not mentioned by Josephus?, but rather, Why, if an anti-Roman mob seized the Temple Mount during Jesus' last days in Jerusalem, is such an uprising not mentioned by Josephus?

3. It is simply not true that I said in my review that the belief that Jesus' career had "an anti-Roman political aspect" originated with Joel Carmichael and S.G.F. Brandon; in fact, I explicitly stated that such a belief goes at least as far back as the 18th-century work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus. What was, to the best of my knowledge, new about Carmichael's book was its claim that Jesus was the leader of an armed rebellion—an argument that Brandon took up and sought to document by an exhaustive analysis of New Testament sources that anticipates Mr. Maccoby's at numerous points.

Beyond this, Mr. Maccoby is right about Joel Carmichael: he does refer to him in his book—once, in a one-line footnote to Chapter 15. As for S.G.F. Brandon (in whose *Jesus and the Zealots* and *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* I am at a loss to detect the slightest trace of Bultmannism), the "frequent references" to him in *Revolution in Judea* consist of eight lines of actual text and nine more lines of footnotes. Nowhere does Mr. Maccoby so much as hint that the central themes of his book were articulated before him by these two men, and, while I preferred to treat this as an oversight in my review, his letter now rules out such an assumption. It is sad to see a scholar so keen to be thought original that he cannot permit himself the gesture of acknowledging a debt to his predecessors.

About one thing Hyam Maccoby does have a just grievance: in speaking in my review of a "Carmichael-Brandon-Maccoby hypothesis," I did not point out, as I should have done, that Mr. Maccoby's conception of Jesus differs somewhat from that of Carmichael and Brandon, and that, unlike the latter, the author of *Revolution in Judea* attributes to Jesus' supposed anti-Roman insurgency, a purely apocalyptic-symbolic, as opposed to a pragmatic-military, significance. Yet Mr. Maccoby is far from consistent here. Thus, while disclaiming serious logistical planning on Jesus' part, he believes that Jesus and a mob of his followers were able to occupy and hold the Temple Mount for several days (no mean task in a heavily garrisoned town like Jerusalem). And, in practically one breath, he writes that "Jesus was not a Zealot" (p. 120) and that "there was no fundamental disparity between Jesus' aims and those of the militant Zealots" (p.121). If there was no fundamental disparity, how unlike the Zealots could Jesus have been?

4. While I admired Mr. Maccoby's elegant interpretation of the Barabbas incident, I did not find it "necessarily convincing" for the simple reason that, since Jesus (Yeshu or Yeshu'a in Hebrew) was a common name in late Second Temple times, there is nothing inherently implausible about two Jesuses having come up for judgment before Pilate at the same time. (And if they did, the incident can be understood in a manner that is fully consistent with the text of the Gospels and opposed to Mr. Maccoby's theory, i.e., by assuming that the mob wanted Jesus Barabbas freed because *he* was an anti-Roman leader, and was willing to sacrifice Jesus of Nazareth because he was not.) This does not mean that Mr. Maccoby's version of the Barabbas story is wrong; neither, however, can it be proved right, since once more we are in the realm of "educated guesses" rather than of "reliable conclusions."

In sum, I should like to say that, whatever my reservations about it, I tried to write a careful and by no means hostile assessment of *Revolution in Judea*, which, along with

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the work of Joel Carmichael and S.G.F. Brandon, offers a novel and interesting interpretation of Jesus' life and death. I am sorry that in his letter to COMMENTARY Hyam Maccoby could not bring himself to treat my review in the same spirit as I treated his book, and that, instead of dealing seriously with the questions that I raised, chose either to "fend them off with a straw," as the old rabbinic saying goes, or to ignore them entirely.

Jazz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I'd hate for COMMENTARY readers to think that I share any of the invidious notions about music and art promulgated by Robert Richman in his strange review of my book, *Riding on a Blue Note* [October 1981]. Mr. Richman is grudgingly kind to me, but heartily censorious of my subject, and when he writes of jazz form that "it simply cannot accommodate the range of experience or feeling of the symphony or concerto," I envision the two of us kneeling before the great god Stereo, he with the *Eroica* and me with "West End Blues," as we try to uncover objective criteria with which to adduce their respective levels of emotion and seriousness. Yet Mr. Richman gives the impression of having gleaned some of his illusions from me. Not true. I could never, for example, have written that bop rhythms "enabled players to improvise more fully and expressively than previously; before long, the improvisatory 'solo' became the centerpiece of a jazz performance." Jazz was a soloist's art from the time Armstrong proved it could be, and if there is a bop soloist who is more "expressive" than Armstrong, Young, Hawkins, Eldridge, Webster, Teagarden, or a dozen others, I haven't heard him. Nor did "Giddins" credit Coltrane with bringing cleanliness back to jazz. Giddins quoted Arthur Blythe to that effect (note quotation marks on page 135). And I assure you, blushing though I ought to be, that "Giddins" is *not* as much "a part of the complex history of the legitimization of jazz as are the musicians." I've only written on the subject for a decade; it was fully legitimized a half-century earlier.

Mr. Richman's real bugaboo is nationalism and race: can a music innovated in America primarily by blacks ever achieve the complexity and seriousness of 19th-century European romanticism? Mr. Richman says no. Yet by an astonishing leap of hubris, he feels himself qualified to decide what is or is not jazz, and his conclusions will surprise numerous musicians who thought they were playing and studying jazz all their lives. He reminds me of the concert violinist who accosted Cecil Taylor with effusive compliments, comparing Taylor with Mozart and Ravel. Taylor, who has often spoken of "the fools who think I don't play jazz," asked him why he didn't talk about Duke Ellington and Bud Powell, whose influences are so much more readily apparent. Why is it that high-art mandarins like Mr. Richman always feel impelled to mask their ignorance with contempt?

Still, Mr. Richman's errors and silly conceits did not originally prompt this letter. Charity did. When he writes that jazz critics, about whom he knows even less than he does about jazz musicians, "seem so sure that jazz is the equal of classical music that they rarely even bother to raise the issue," I feel duty bound to alert him to a few of the many critics, musicologists, and musicians who have raised precisely that issue (sometimes obsessively) for more than sixty years, including Ernest Ansermet, Roger Pryor Dodge, Rudi Blesh, Winthrop Sargeant, Charles Edward Smith, Wilder Hobson, Sidney Finkelstein, Aaron Copland, Leonard Feather, Max Harrison, Gunther Schuller, Martin Williams, Wilfrid Mellers, Leroy Ostransky, Henry Pleasants, André Hodier, and Albert Murray, for starters. I am no more interested in convincing haughty Europhiles like Mr. Richman that Ellington's genius (for one) is "serious" and "legitimate" and "art" than I am in arguing that *Ulysses* is not pornography, *Le Sacre du Printemps* not aimless cacophony, and cinema not just a passing fad. It's been done.

GARY GIDDINS

New York City

ROBERT RICHMAN writes:

In reviewing Gary Giddins's book, my intention, which clearly bears repeating, was to question the reflexive (and very often defensive) habit of many jazz fans and some critics to compare jazz favorably with classical music. Mr. Giddins's hyperbolic response only underlines the usefulness of such an effort.

Mr. Giddins says that I "give the impression of having gleaned some of [my] illusions from [him]." All I gleaned from Mr. Giddins was some history—I take full responsibility for my "invidious notions about music and art." Yet when it comes to specifics, the "illusion," for example, that the improvisatory solo became the centerpiece of a jazz performance can in fact be "gleaned" from Mr. Giddins's essay on Gillespie, which contains the following characteristic sentence: "The bop soloist made himself the focal point around which time coalesced" (p. 215).

Despite his protest, Mr. Giddins *is* a part of the legitimization of jazz (by which I mean its acceptance by the critical and cultural establishment), a process beginning only with the start of bop. Before that, jazz players played and jazz critics cheered but no one listened very seriously to either.

Nationalism and race are Mr. Giddins's bugaboo, not mine; it is he who has introduced them into the discussion. "Can a music," asks Giddins, "innovated in America primarily by blacks ever achieve the complexity and seriousnes of 19th-century European romanticism? Mr. Richman says no." Where? In Mr. Giddins's imagination is where. My "conclusions" about what is and is not jazz might "surprise numerous musicians . . . ," but that doesn't mean they aren't right. And some musicians themselves, like Leo Smith and Anthony Davis, no longer even refer to the music they play as "jazz."

As for the list of critics who champion the seriousness of jazz, for every name of Mr. Giddins's one can offer six more on the other side. But that is not the point. The real point has to do with a music critic who cries racism when he meets a musical opinion contrary to his, and invokes the term "Europhile" as if it were a new strain of venereal disease. Is André Hodier, the renowned French jazz critic (whom Mr. Giddins mentions reverently in his letter), a "Europhile" too? He should be; the way he writes about the constricting nature of jazz rhythms and sonorities makes me sound like a booster.

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Reagan & the Russians

Walter Laqueur

IT IS a sensible custom to suspend judgment about the policy of a new administration. Six months have passed and another six, and in a press conference President Reagan has provided an interim assessment of his own: "Our accomplishments with regard to foreign policy have been astounding." The word "astounding" has various meanings and connotations, but not even President Reagan's arms-reduction proposals of late November can redeem the impression that in foreign policy, 1981 was unfortunately not an *annus mirabilis*. Evidence for this conclusion lies all around, in the Middle East and Asia, in Latin America and Africa, but perhaps nowhere so saliently as in the main arena of international affairs, U.S.-Soviet relations.

TERRORISM was the first international issue on which the Reagan administration took a strong stand. Welcoming the Teheran hostages back home, President Reagan announced that there were limits to American patience; in the future, our policy would be one of "swift and effective retribution." In his first news conference, the very next day, Reagan stressed that a lot of options were open to this big and powerful nation; terrorists would no longer go to bed at night in the certain knowledge that nothing untoward would happen to them before morning. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, in a press conference the same week, accused the Soviet Union of training, funding, and equipping terrorist groups as part of a conscious policy, and said that the battle against international terrorism would be this administration's way of securing human rights.

Haig himself, it should be recalled, had been the victim of a terrorist attack while serving as NATO commander-in-chief. Soon after taking office, President Reagan was also shot at, albeit not by an international terrorist. There was every reason to think that out of the experience and beliefs of these men some energetic action would flow, or at the very least some damaging revelations about the links between the Soviet Union and the terrorists. But what happened in fact was short of sensational. A plan was discussed to merge two State Department working groups to deal with the problem; the new body was to be headed by a deputy undersecretary or even assistant secretary rather than an ambassador as in the past. The message was clear: an upgrading of effort in bureaucratic terms, but nothing to sow panic in the ranks of terrorists. Then in May the State Department held a conference to which academic specialists on terrorism were invited, along with some government experts. However welcome such meetings, the fact is that academic studies of terrorism have not so far had a decisive impact on the battle against the phenomenon. Lastly, it was announced that the State Department would be working "strenuously toward possible UN action on terrorism"—again a commendable effort, but not a departure.

The CIA took positive action, reportedly only after some energetic prodding by William Casey, its new director: it revised upward its statistics on terrorism. Where a 1980 report claimed that some 3,336 international terrorist incidents had taken place since 1968, the revised statement of June 1981 said that the real cumulative figure was 6,714. According to Richard T. Kennedy of the State Department, 1980 had been a record year, with 642 people killed, including 10 Americans. Yet at the same time it was stated that Americans (and American property) were the most frequent targets in international terrorist attacks. There was clearly a discrepancy in these figures.

The key to the riddle is in the arbitrary character of the statistics, a matter which could be passed over without further comment were it not typical of the general confusion prevailing in the field. It is one thing for the Secretary of State or the President to use the term "terrorist" a little loosely. No one expects them to adhere to a scholarly definition, and in any case scholars in this field do not agree with one another. But once it comes to taking action, or even to preparing statistics, it is of some importance to differentiate among terrorism, guerrilla warfare, civil war, insurgency, and various other forms of political and military violence. Unless one uses more rigorous categories, statistics can prove almost anything—a frightening rise in terrorism or a dramatic decline. Only a few years

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ago CIA publications, following academic fashion, were reporting that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Then in 1981, as a no-nonsense administration came in, a broader interpretation of terrorism led to a quick adjustment of the statistics.

A realistic assessment of terrorist activities over the last ten years would have shown that there has not been much change: in some countries terrorism has been in decline, in others there has been an upsurge. Overall, despite some striking attacks which attracted a great deal of publicity, such as the shooting of the Pope, terrorist groups have been less in the limelight than was the case ten years ago. This is true of Turkey as well as of the Middle East generally, of Latin America, and even of Northern Ireland where the number of victims has declined. Italy is an exception, and there may be one or two others, partly due to the reemergence of extreme right-wing terrorism. All this does not mean that there will not be another rise in such operations in the future, but there is less justification today for treating terrorism as practically the world's most pressing problem.

Contemporary governments face great difficulties dealing with terrorism—something that was not the case before World War I. The reasons for past success, well known to every student of terrorism, can be summarized in one word: infiltration. The czarist government always had agents among the leadership of terrorist groups, and the same is true of the British and the Fenians. In those days, accountants and government committees did not have to be informed of every financial transaction, nor were there legal complications if agents and informers became involved in terrorist operations. Today the capacity to engage in covert action no longer exists in democratic societies, and even if it did exist, there would be insoluble legal problems. The hands of democratic governments are tied: this is why terrorist groups have shown far greater resilience than in the past. It is a price which democracies have been willing to pay, no doubt rightly, at least as long as terrorism does not constitute a major menace.

There is a second factor which has impeded the fight against terrorism. Before World War I it was not customary for sovereign countries to employ terrorism as a means of surrogate warfare. This changed after 1918, with fascist Italy sponsoring various "national-liberation" movements for its own ends. In our day Libya and, less frequently, certain other Arab countries have continued the tradition quite openly, the Soviet Union more discreetly and selectively.

IF IT is difficult to take decisive action against terrorism, however, it should have been possible to point effectively to the international ramifications of the problem. The inability to do so with any forcefulness reflects a failure of intelligence-gathering and of political judgment; the administration's sweeping allegations about Soviet support for terrorism were backed by rather flimsy evidence. One former CIA official, Harry Rositzke, responded to the administration's charges by distinguishing between Soviet support for legitimate wars of national liberation, as in the Middle East or Namibia, and its opposition both in principle and practice to "irrational terror." According to Rositzke, Soviet leaders believe in diplomatic propriety and have no desire to be seen in the company of the Red Brigades or the Baader-Meinhof gang, or even to be connected with separatist movements like the IRA or the Basque ETA. In short, the Soviet Union does not "totally control" its subcontractors. (*KGB: The Eyes of Russia*, Doubleday, 1981.)

All this is perfectly true. The Soviets want a division of labor, not total control. Terrorism is a messy business, and there may always be mishaps; for this reason it is wise to let subcontractors take both the praise and the blame. Indirect, carefully laundered support is extended by the Soviet Union to many of these groups (not only on the Left), to help them destabilize certain countries (Iran, Turkey, Spain, Ireland, etc.). Qaddafi, Castro, and Arafat act as transmission belts to all kinds of shadowy characters and movements—it is a case of the semi-respectable providing money, training, arms, and logistical support to the non-respectable. No one in Moscow is offended if Qaddafi, Castro, and Arafat also make a point in public of their independence, and insist that they are not Soviet puppets.

Such help, for example, has been given blatantly and on a massive scale to Turkish terrorists—without encountering the protest of the Reagan administration. Hundreds of thousands of weapons have been shipped into Turkey by the Palestinians from Syria, by way of Bulgaria and the Black Sea, by means of Libyan ships. Many millions of dollars have been given, terrorists have been trained, radio stations have broadcast support—all this in a concerted effort to destabilize the Turkish government. These transactions have not been secret; the facts and figures are widely available, as are the texts of broadcasts from Bulgaria and East Germany.

For understandable reasons the Turks themselves have been reluctant to add to their other troubles by openly attacking the Soviets, the Bulgarians, and the Libyans for their support of the terrorists; the Turks need economic assistance and also political help in their conflict with Greece. But why the coyness of the U.S., in a case where the facts are so readily available? Perhaps we have been reluctant to offend the PLO, which is seen as a potential interlocutor in the not-too-distant future. (A State Department document circulated in November mentioned, among the recipients of Libyan help, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, but carefully avoided mention of the PLO.)

The failure to spell out facts systematically and

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in detail, the readiness to be satisfied with platitudes about international terrorism as an assault on civilization, demonstrates that the government bureaucracy either is inefficient or is intrinsically incapable of taking initiative. This would matter less if the initial rhetorical thrust had not promised a satisfying execution of policy. A great power cannot afford to engage in empty threats.

THE reaction of the Reagan administration to the problem of terrorism was characteristic, and said much about its future behavior in office. Its instincts were certainly right, and reflected a widespread popular mood: the feeling that America had been abused and pushed around for too long and that tough action was needed. But there was no clear idea of what to do, and the failure to make the necessary discriminations did not render the task any easier.

In any event, although it preoccupied the new administration for a few weeks, terrorism soon disappeared from its agenda; it is of interest in retrospect mainly as a study in confusion and the evident lack of bureaucratic depth. Far more central to relations with the Soviet Union are the issues of military posture and strategy, of arms control, of NATO.

The new administration came to power stressing the weak defense record of President Carter. In his last budget Carter had proposed real increases of 7.8 percent for 1981, and 5.3 percent for the year after. Reagan countered with real increases of 12.4 percent and 14.6 percent and an average increase of 7 percent for each of the four years thereafter. For the Republicans, military superiority was the goal.

Reagan's figures were based on an assumption of 4 percent annual growth in the economy and a balanced budget by 1984. But it soon appeared that these assumptions were overly optimistic. David Stockman came and demanded a 30 percent cut in planned defense spending. Since the President opposed an increase in taxes as a matter of principle, a retreat in defense expenditure became inevitable. At first the proposed cuts in defense programs were relatively small, but there was the near certainty that more would follow. By December, the general consensus in Washington was that the defense budget was unlikely to grow even by the promised 7 percent a year. It was decided to scale down the original proposals to install MX missiles in Titan silos, a decision which, whatever the financial merits of the case, left this particular "window of vulnerability" open. The B-1 bomber, which had been given up by the previous administration, was revived as a stopgap measure (with a price tag bound to stir up a new debate even among advocates of a strong defense).

As James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, wrote recently:

> Seven months have been wasted on an irrelevant debate (on whether the "immense" funds ostensibly being made available to the Department of Defense will be usefully spent). We shall now—inevitably—have to make do with smaller growth in defense resources than were projected by the Carter administration—previously denounced as hopelessly inadequate. So much for "making America strong again" and "closing the window of vulnerability."

Withal, the wish to strengthen defense had been genuine. If the economic prospects deteriorated, if the administration came under congressional pressures that made retreat necessary, this was a real surprise. The Reagan team had never taken seriously the warnings of the economists who told them they could not cut taxes, go for a bigger defense expenditure, and still have a balanced budget. But once it appeared that the recession would continue and cuts in spending were necessary, it was no longer certain that defense would be given the highest priority. The administration's early assumptions in this respect were mistaken, but there had been no attempt to mislead the public; the failure was a failure to anticipate events.

More difficult to explain were the frequent political contradictions which appeared in the early declarations of the administration. On April 24, 1981, Secretary of State Haig, in a speech to the Society of Newspaper Editors, said that Moscow was the greatest source of international insecurity today, that we would never accept the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and that only the U.S. had the "pivotal strength" to convince the Soviets and their proxies that violence would not advance their cause. On the very same day, President Reagan stated that he was lifting the grain embargo against the Soviet Union that had been imposed by the Carter administration in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan. American farmers, Reagan said, had been unfairly singled out to bear the burden of this ineffective national policy. The President also restated our opposition to the continued occupation of Afghanistan: "There will never be a weakening of this resolve." Yet there *was* a weakening of resolve. As Malcolm Toon, a former ambassador to Moscow, wrote: "There had been no evidence of improved Soviet behavior or lessened tension to justify the lifting of the embargo at this time."

The decision was bound to be seen by friends and foes alike as proof of American inconsistency. It was bound to make difficult, perhaps impossible, any concerted political and economic sanctions against the Soviet Union in the event of future aggression. Here was a case of putting domestic politics above policy; for even if it were true that the farmers were unfairly bearing the burden, ways and means could have been found to recompense them. Similarly, the President had some very angry words about Western Europe's reliance on the Siberian oil and gas pipeline being built by the Soviets, yet he did not intervene to block a Caterpillar sale of pipelaying equipment or the use of General Electric technology for the pipeline's gas turbines. It is true that the democratic process involves com-

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promises, and that the administration could not possibly have had everything its own way. But in politics it is the result that counts, not the mitigating circumstances.

A CERTAIN amount of inconsistency is excusable in a learning process, though it is unfortunate that so much of the process had to take place in public, and that the Europeans were drawn in as they were. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger went to Bonn in April, and upon his return reported that there had been a "high degree of unanimity" and "a very solid front" among the NATO foreign and defense ministers. Soon enough, as advocates of disarmament seized headlines and thousands marched to protest the planned deployment by NATO of a new generation of nuclear missiles, it appeared that this unanimity was less than complete.

Had the administration been out of touch with conditions in Europe and the pressures to which most European governments were exposed? As late as October 28, the White House deputy press secretary read a prepared statement saying that the anti-nuclear protests in Western Europe did not represent a widespread view. Public-opinion polls, the statement went on, had consistently shown strong majority support for NATO, and the West European governments shared American concern about the unceasing Soviet build-up. (Yet Secretary Weinberger himself, speaking at Chatham House in London, remarked that 250,000 people going anywhere and doing anything should be taken seriously.) It was the old story of diplomats and ministers meeting other diplomats and ministers, reassuring each other that there was nothing to worry about.

There was, in fact, a great deal to worry about. European jitters had been reinforced by statements in Washington that were at best unnecessary, such as Reagan's remark in conversation that the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the European field would not inevitably mean a commitment of the full might of the U.S. to the defense of Europe. "Reagan's Gaffe Puts Fear into Europe" was a typical European headline in reaction. To be sure, the mood in some Western European countries is such that even if the President had kept silent the "fear" would be no less great.* In fact there was nothing new or monstrous in the statement; the President was simply speculating about a most unlikely scenario. But it strengthened all the old European anxieties of "decoupling," and raised the specter of Europe's becoming a nuclear battlefield while America stayed out of the action.

At this stage help for the President came paradoxically from Brezhnev who, in an interview with *Der Spiegel* a few days later, said it was altogether illusory to assume there would ever be limited nuclear conflict in Europe—such conflict would immediately escalate into full-scale atomic war. This effectively undercut the argument of the West European peace movement, according to which it is American policy to make Europe, and Europe only, a giant cemetery in the coming war. But emotions were running so high in Europe that Brezhnev's statement, which should have been the end of the affair, hardly registered, whereas Reagan's "warmongering" continued to preoccupy the media. A few days later Secretary Haig added his bit about detonating a nuclear device as a demonstration effect in case of an attack by Warsaw Pact forces. As was to be expected, this added fresh fuel to the fire. Then Secretary Weinberger provided a divergent version, the White House staff a third, a fourth was given by the President during his press conference on November 10, a fifth by his staff a few hours later.

A demonstration effect of a different sort was provided in November by the sudden appearance of a Soviet submarine in the middle of a Swedish naval base. Only a few days before, the Swedish press had been ridiculing a study released by the Pentagon on "Soviet Military Power." *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's most influential paper, editorialized that this study was reminiscent of the mythical "missile gap" of 1960. It found reason to object both to the material and to the way it had been presented. Obviously Washington was only trying to put pressure on its allies for a greater defense effort: "This Soviet military threat is what the Americans always want to talk about. Others wish they would sometimes talk instead about peaceful possibilities for securing the future across bloc boundaries."

Then the Soviet submarine with its nuclear torpedoes appeared, much to the discomfort of *Dagens Nyheter*. Was it a phantom like the missile gap, or an emissary to discuss "peaceful possibilities for securing the future"? For a week there was great commotion in Scandinavia; then the Swedish minister of defense declared that nothing much could be done, for the captain and the crew had diplomatic immunity. The incident did have a certain salutary effect in Sweden, but it was far from clear how long it would last.

Meanwhile in Britain the London *Times* had published a letter of a scientist, Professor H. Lipson, arguing the case for unilateral surrender. After two or three centuries of Russian domination, the professor wrote, "Britain would be a nation again, possibly better from having been tempered by foreign occupation." Interestingly, the letter was taken perfectly seriously, and was hotly debated. Even those who disagreed with it seemed to accept the premise that in a Communist world there would be no more wars: to be "red" was a guarantee against being dead. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone that in a Communist world the probability of war in Britain would be greater than it is now simply because there would

*See my article, "Hollanditis: A New Stage in European Neutralism," COMMENTARY, August 1981.

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be not one Communist superstate but several big Communist powers in deep conflict with each other, striving for hegemony, unencumbered by liberal scruples or the pressures of a pacifist public opinion.* At any rate, exchanges of this kind have become a daily occurrence in Western Europe, which shows, not for the first time, that U.S. policy-makers face a situation calling at once for much tact and much firmness. They have shown about as much of the one as of the other.

It was in this context that, in late November, following pressure from various quarters, President Reagan made his speech suggesting the "zero option": the West would cancel its plans to deploy intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe if the Soviet Union agreed to remove those it has already put into place. The proposal was a political necessity. It clearly upset the Russians and provided momentary relief to some of the governments of Western Europe. But just as one swallow does not make a summer, one overdue speech cannot fulfill the function of a consistent, long-term strategy. It is not even enough to regain the initiative which has been lost.

The offer of a cut in nuclear missiles gave President Reagan a good press in Europe. But for how long? Within a short time, the old dissents in the alliance will resurface. The Soviet leaders have no intention of agreeing to any significant changes in the balance of power in Europe. They want to freeze force levels where they are; as far as they are concerned, the asymmetry has come to stay. True, if they were reasonably certain that the Pershing and cruise missiles would be deployed, the Russians might be ready to negotiate. But at this point they have little to fear. West European governments have told Washington that the dialogue with Moscow is a political imperative for them. And this is only the beginning of the story, for they also need to be able to show results. Given the lack of incentive for the Russians to make any substantial concessions, "progress" can only come if Washington retreats.

IT IS tempting to dismiss the rise of the European anti-nuclear movement, of neutralism and defeatism, as a case of temporary (or perhaps even permanent) aberration, of the kind that affects nations and sometimes whole continents from time to time. The successes of the movement, far from enhancing the cause of peace in Europe and the world, have made it more difficult to reach agreement with the Soviets about any sort of disarmament. Why should the Soviet Union make concessions if there is such powerful pressure in the West for unilateral disarmament? Yet the movement did not arise in a vacuum, and it would never have become so influential had Western strategy not reached an impasse.

The basic problem was grasped in Washington as early as 1950 by the authors of a famous national-security directive, NSC-68. According to that document, it was "imperative to increase as rapidly as possible our general air, ground, and sea strength and that of our allies to a point where we are militarily not so heavily dependent on atomic weapons." But this altogether sound advice was ignored in favor of Eisenhower's and Dulles's "New Look" for American and Western defense—massive nuclear retaliation on the one hand, and a deemphasis of land, naval, and tactical air forces on the other. At the time it seemed a natural course of action for a democracy, as well as being considerably less expensive than a full-scale build-up of conventional forces. Only a few voices warned of the fatal consequences; one was that of the late Hans J. Morgenthau, who wrote in 1956:

> They have said that they cannot afford to maintain two military establishments, one designed to deter all-out atomic war, the other to wage non-atomic conventional war. . . . To say this is tantamount to saying that in contrast to the Soviet Union—which continues to support two military establishments—the richest, politically and technologically most advanced, and still most powerful combination of nations cannot afford to protect their interests without running the risk of universal destruction. Which is another way of saying that they cannot protect their interests at all insofar as their protection requires the use of force. The truth is they can well afford two military establishments. What their leaders think they cannot afford is the political courage to demand of their peoples the sacrifices necessary to protect and promote their national interests under the conditions of atomic peace. In a word, the deficit is political and moral, not economic and financial. With the decision to scrap traditional military establishments and arm its remnants with atomic weapons, the Western world may well have passed the point of no return. At the end of the road that the new pacifism has begun to travel there may indeed lie peace, either the peace of appeasement and ultimate surrender or else the peace of Babylon and Carthage—the peace of total destruction.

Just and prescient words. Even now, with the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult to understand the failure to recognize that the Soviets were aiming at nuclear parity at the very least. Fortunately the traditional military establishment was not altogether scrapped, only neglected; at every NATO meeting resolutions were passed to strengthen conventional forces. Yet reasons were always found—political, psychological, and above all budgetary—to postpone a determined effort, and this led inevitably to a constant lowering of the nuclear threshold and to a "delayed tripwire strategy," a reliance on theater nuclear forces as the only effective means of countering a Warsaw Pact conventional invasion. This strategy was based on two dubious assumptions—first, that the Soviets would play by the rules of the game established by NATO, i.e. refrain from esca-

*This point was made by the American scholar Adam Ulam, in a subsequent letter to the *Times*.

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lation, and second that NATO (and above all America) had the necessary "C3" structure (command, control, and communications) to conduct a graduated nuclear war. In other words, that things would not get out of hand.

For many years the nuclear debate remained the prerogative of a small group of a few hundred nuclear strategists, mainly on this side of the Atlantic, who had developed their own language, symbols, and concepts. Immersed in their internal debate over dyads and triads, over countercity, countervalue, and counterforce, they failed to realize that the political ground under their feet had begun to quake. It was not so long ago, to give but one example, that Colin S. Gray wrote: "One cannot be confident that the U.S. defense community will behave sensibly and preserve the triadic structure of its strategic force posture."* Today decisions of this kind are no longer in the hands of the defense community, either in Europe or, increasingly, in America. Nuclear strategy has become the concern of wider sections of the public, and while the public does not understand the finer points of this recondite field, it has understood enough to express concern about the general direction of Western strategy.

As far as European opinion is concerned, it is quite immaterial that the planned deployment of cruise and ballistic missiles has not been thrust upon a reluctant Europe by a bellicose, aggressive America but that, on the contrary, the decision is a European-led response to a European need for a counterbalance to the Soviet SS-20. What is important is that NATO nuclear doctrine has lost credibility in Western Europe, and as a result European governments have become more and more reluctant to implement the very decisions about missile deployment which they themselves took not long ago.

At this point U.S. responsibilities come to an end: the governments and peoples of Europe face a decision which America cannot make for them. It is one thing to press for arrangements that will lift the dangerously low nuclear threshold by strengthening conventional defenses and removing thousands of shorter-range nuclear weapons; in such an undertaking America has a role to play. But if the wish should prevail to remove the deterrent from the continent altogether, to make Western Europe a nuclear-free zone, this would mean the end of the alliance. Why should Americans become the only target of Soviet nuclear forces in what would essentially be a struggle for the freedom of Europe? (The suggestion that the Atlantic alliance might be replaced by defense treaties with individual countries such as France is hardly practicable.)

It has been argued that it is probably too late now to find a way back to a NATO strategy supported by a broad consensus in Europe; to strengthen conventional forces would be much too expensive, and anyway the political will no longer exists. But it seems a little premature to give up the struggle. According to Pentagon figures, NATO is actually spending more on defense than the Warsaw Pact, and also has more men under arms. The main problem is that almost half of NATO spending is on "people costs," as opposed to only 25 percent in the case of the Warsaw Pact: hence the Pact's higher weapon output. The Soviets are not to blame for the unfortunate tail-to-head ratio of NATO divisions (i.e., the small proportion of combat soldiers); for the irresistible urge of Western planners to go for the most modern, most sophisticated—and most expensive and vulnerable—weapons systems; for cost overruns, and for systems cancelled after billions have already been invested in them; for insufficient hardware on the central front in Europe; for the lack of standardization; and for other sins of omission. But while these are serious problems, they are not insoluble. The Warsaw Pact has more troops than NATO on the central front in Europe, but the discrepancy is not very great. Even the cost of putting right the dangerous imbalance in tanks and guns would be infinitely less than the cost of the B-1. An iron fist might be needed to carry out these reforms, but the point should be stressed that the decisive obstacles are not budgetary.

If technically the difficulties facing NATO in Europe are surmountable, about political will one writes with less assurance. The "peace movement" opposes not just the deployment of Pershings and Tomahawks, but defense in general. Sections of that movement would prefer domination (or even occupation) of their country to an alliance with America. And there are defeatists in the United States, too, who would call for the immediate unilateral removal of broomsticks if it appeared that broomsticks gave the country a military advantage. But even in Europe, where unilateralism is the official policy of some political parties (as, in England, both Labor and the Liberals), people actually holding these views are still in the minority; they could be isolated if there were an alternative in the form of a sensible strategy. So far they have not been put to this test.

Without military strength, containment is no more than a policy of bluff. But by the same token a single-minded concentration on the military aspects of containment leads nowhere. Containment is the political struggle for the minds of men at home and abroad; it has reference to friends as well as to neutrals and enemies. The failure of the Reagan administration in this respect has been almost inexplicable. Afghanistan and Poland and the deepening economic crisis in Eastern Europe should have placed the Soviet Union on the defensive. Instead it is the United States that has found itself in political isolation, cast as a delirious warmonger forever looking to deploy new weapons of mass destruction.

It has been said that democracies can either

*"The Strategic Process Triad," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1978.

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rearm or talk peace, but not do both at once. Nothing could be further from the truth. There has been congressional enthusiasm for an expanded defense, but the administration has not been very successful in formulating a program. At the same time, at least up until President Reagan's dramatic bid to open negotiations for reducing nuclear arms in Europe, there has been diplomatic paralysis. Stranger yet, those in key positions seem, or seemed, unaware of the true state of affairs. Thus Edwin Meese maintained in late October that the United States was in a stronger position in every capital then had been the case ten months earlier:

> We have made major strides in advancing the opportunities for peace in the Middle East. We have enhanced human rights through quiet diplomacy in several places throughout the world. We have improved the unity and solidity of the NATO alliance. And we have been dealing realistically with the Soviets and have actually brought them into arms-limitation negotiations. So by any criterion you can name, the President has been successful in both the development and the implementation of foreign policy. (*Christian Science Monitor*, October 23, 1981.)

Meese could have said that the President faced great difficulties, that the Carter heritage was a crippling legacy, that Congress was unhelpful, that the media engaged in destructive criticism—there would have been some force in each of these arguments. But how could he detect successes and major strides forward where there have been none?

Yet there *have* been many openings for American leadership in the past year, opportunities for putting the alliance on a more solid footing, for increasing American influence among the noncommitted, for restoring respect for American power among our enemies, for exploiting new strategic opportunities in Eastern Europe. It seems, too, that real proposals have been made; the recent State Department memorandum on a strong human-rights policy was as sensible a document as one could wish. But it came out in November, not in February, and it is not clear that it will become official policy, and if so whether and with what emphasis it will be pursued.

One example of missed opportunities deserves special comment. Public diplomacy, the exchange of ideas and people, the effort to give foreign populations an understanding of U.S. society and culture, is one of the most important aims of American foreign policy. Successive Presidents have spoken of the important work of the U.S. Information Agency (since 1978 the International Communication Agency), of the Voice of America, and of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Yet when it comes to budget allocations ICA has received very low priority. Its very modest requests have been scaled down even further by Congress. As a result very little has been achieved in this field.

It is one of the riddles of the century that a media-conscious society like the United States has never shown even a remote understanding of the importance of these activities. Not only does the United States spend infinitely less on cultural activities and foreign broadcasting than the Soviet Union and the other Communist countries, but cultural and informational programs constitute a much smaller percentage of the annual budget in America than in virtually any other developed country (0.1 percent as opposed to 0.7 percent for France, 0.6 percent for West Germany).

Ask a Soviet leader whether Soviet policy would be hurt more by the procurement of one of the fine ships for which Secretary of the Navy John Lehman has been fighting like a lion or a doubling of U.S. spending on information services. If he were honest he would reply that it does not particularly matter whether the Navy gets one or even five more ships, for their political effect is very small. By contrast, any increase in U.S. foreign broadcasting would greatly inconvenience the Communist system. (It should be noted in passing that the cost of one ship is about four times the total ICA budget.*) The Soviets, unlike official Washington, are aware of the importance of the "ideological struggle." But they want it to be a race without U.S. participation, for they know their own vulnerability only too well. The same can be said of dictatorships in other parts of the globe that have been fighting in UNESCO for the imposition of press censorship under the guise of a new "world information order."

Among the proposals of the Reagan administration has been the establishment of a radio station broadcasting to Cuba. It is a sensible idea; why should the field be left open to Castro? In fact a good case could be made for establishing a dozen stations broadcasting to Latin America and other parts of the world. Yet this modest proposal to counter Castro's propaganda caused a storm of indignation: the U.S. mission in Havana protested vehemently and leaked its protest to the press; this was followed by a negative piece in the New York *Times* by Flora Lewis, the paper's foreign-affairs columnist. The diplomats in Havana claimed that Castro would retaliate, and since his stations were much more powerful (500 Kw) than any American station (50 Kw), he could create havoc from Miami to Alaska. Furthermore, it was said the broadcasts might provoke another exodus from Cuba, and no one wanted *that*.

Any radio amateur could have told the Havana-based diplomats that the VOA transmitters in Greenville, North Carolina, Bethany, Ohio, Delano, California, and elsewhere, outdated as they are, also have a 500 Kw capacity, and anyway

*This is not a disparagement of Secretary Lehman's efforts. On the contrary, with the MX and the B-1 in deep trouble, the role of the U.S. Navy will be of great importance. This is particularly true with regard to the Navy's Tomahawk cruise missile which should go far toward closing the "window of vulnerability."

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there is really not much the Cuban stations could do to disrupt more than a few U.S. programs. But diplomats apparently prefer a quiet life to an angry Castro; a good diplomat has to see the point of view of the other side. Still, diplomacy of this kind is not the only way of conducting foreign policy.

Flora Lewis argued at one and the same time that the new radio would stimulate another exodus from Cuba and that it might backfire by provoking a nationalistic reaction in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America: "The distress of Latin America is chronic. It won't be harangued away, with or without Mr. Castro's influence. We only fool ourselves if we think shouting him down will help."

IF THE foreign-affairs columnist of the New York *Times*, a person with a certain experience in world affairs, is not aware of the political importance of broadcasting in the second half of the 20th century, there may not be much hope of support from others less exposed to the realities of foreign affairs. The fact that radio broadcasts played an enormous role in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran has apparently escaped her notice, as did the determined and almost successful Soviet effort to destabilize Turkey through "unofficial" radio stations in Bulgaria and East Germany. She may never have heard of the huge influence of Nasser's *Sawt el-Arab* in the 1960's. And in a quite different direction, she may not realize the connection between recent events in Poland (and in other East European countries) and the fact that Radio Free Europe has for many years been the second (or third) domestic channel, providing systematic and objective information about phenomena otherwise unreported in those parts. This has nothing to do with "haranguing" or "shouting down" or, generally speaking, with crude propaganda methods, which are indeed usually counterproductive. The BBC external services have provided a model of radio broadcasts which can have a decided political impact over a long period—but then these services too have been cut down.*

U.S foreign broadcasts are one aspect of ICA's activities, perhaps the most important because they provide the only means of reaching hundreds of millions of people cut off by their rulers from the outside world. But there is also room for various other initiatives, official, semi-official, and private, in any part of the globe. Experience in Europe in the years after World War II showed how much could be achieved in this respect by a handful of energetic and knowledgeable people. Paradoxically there was then a greater understanding in Washington of the importance of the battle for the minds of men than there is today. Yet since those days Soviet propaganda has become far more sophisticated and its resources infinitely greater, whereas U.S. capacity has all but vanished.

American neglect of this field has been much worse than the neglect of defense; in this building there is not just a window of vulnerability, there are hardly any walls left standing. The quality of many ICA services may not be high at present; how could it be different in view of the agency's risible budget? In 1980 an advisory committee suggested a budget increase of $200 million, yet what is really needed is a sum at least ten times that magnitude; even then the ICA budget would be only 1.5 percent of defense expenditure. But the administration provides no real leadership, Congress remains unconvinced, the diplomats do not want to be disturbed, and Flora Lewis threatens with horrible consequences. It is not a promising outlook.

REVIEWING the first year of the Reagan foreign policy one is driven to the conclusion that a strategy is not yet in sight, only occasional comments, gestures, and reactions—sometimes conflicting, often inconsistent. In fact, it does not seem to be fully realized that such a strategy is needed, that defense, foreign policy, and international economics have to be coordinated and integrated. Paradoxically, at the very time that the Soviet leadership has opted for the primacy of foreign policy, America has a new administration which, by design or by default, has opted for the primacy of domestic policy. There may be periods in the history of nations during which passivity in foreign policy, the abstention from any positive action, is called for, but the present time is not one of them.

The foreign-policy agenda has been obvious for a long time; also the ways and means of approaching the crucial issues. Everything has been said but very little has been done; restating the problems will not produce action. It used to be said that Europe needed a shock to be galvanized into action. One fears the same is now true of America. Meanwhile time runs out.

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*Some of the pertinent issues have been discussed in a recent article by Kenneth Adelman in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1981) and in more detail by David Abshire, *International Broadcasting* (*Washington Papers* #35, 1977).

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Notes from the American Underground

Midge Decter

ONE DAY in 1969 a twenty-two-year-old Swarthmore graduate named Jane Alpert—dressed, as she recounts in her recently published memoirs,* in her white kid gloves and adorned with a ladylike touch of make-up—traveled on a New York City bus downtown to the Federal Building in Foley Square and there planted a time-bomb on the 40th floor. The 40th floor was occupied by the Department of the Army. Back home in her East Village apartment huddled a group of five accomplices anxiously awaiting the outcome of her mission. Some time earlier, members of this group had stolen a supply of dynamite from a construction lot and had commenced to manufacture bombs. One building, headquarters of the Marine Midland Bank, had already been bombed by Miss Alpert's lover, but for a number of reasons that action had been deemed a failure. Miss Alpert by her own account had a two-fold purpose: to prove, to herself as well as her associates, that she was an invaluable contributor to the revolutionary process in which they were collectively participating; and to prove to her lover that she could be more effective than he. At 2:00 A.M. on the following day, the moment at which the device had been timed to go off, the group was on the roof of her apartment building ready to witness her triumph with binoculars. The Federal Building suddenly went dark, indicating that the bomb, placed in a closet housing electrical equipment, had indeed gone off successfully. "At that moment," Miss Alpert remarks in the Sunday-supplement tone that is characteristic of her book throughout, "my joy was undiluted."

She was, as the world may remember, soon after to be taken into custody by the FBI: her lover, Sam Melville (né Grossman), with an almost unvarying penchant for failure having subsequently embarked on a cross-country spree of bombing that unfortunately included a two-man action undertaken with an FBI informer.

She was also to jump the $20,000 bail supplied by her distraught but loyal parents and to spend some four years traveling in the American radical underground, abetted and supported by parents, friends, friends of friends, and strangers.

Sam Melville, to her intense grief but also, as she tells us, to her relief—for one of the things that happened to her while underground was a conversion from radical leftism to radical feminism—was killed in the Attica prison riots of 1971. (She had in fact been in a profound rage against him since even before the time of the bomb conspiracy, a rage made up in about equal parts of sexual jealousy and disappointment that he was not really the revolutionary hero she had fancied him to be. Radical feminism had at last enabled her to give a highfalutin name to that rage.)

Late in 1974 she gave herself up, was sentenced to 27 months in jail, 18 for her part in the bombing conspiracy and 9 for jumping bail (later she was given an additional 4 months for contempt of court). In all, she was to spend two years in jail. Following which, inevitably, she set out to write a book, with the encouragement and support among countless others of her now considerably poorer but still stalwart family.

GIVEN the normal constraints and longueurs of book publishing, it has to be seen as a coincidence—though, of course, the kind of coincidence for which publishers do not in their wildest moments of optimism dare to hope—that *Growing Up Underground* should have appeared just at the moment when the world was being given fresh and urgent reason to think about the American radical underground again.

What happened was that some twelve years after that first moment of Jane Alpert's undiluted joy, a group of radicals, composed of an as yet undetermined number of members of the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army, and perhaps other fugitive groups, took part in a murderous and unsuccessful attempt to rob a Brink's truck outside a bank in Nanuet, New York. The details of this robbery bespeak an attempt both bloody-minded and amateurish, culminating, at a fatal shoot-out near Nyack, in blazing guns, zooming

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**Growing Up Underground*, Morrow, 372 pp., $13.95.

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cars, hysteria, and panic. By the time the operation was over, a Brink's guard and two policemen were dead and four of the robbers were in custody. (Within a few days five other people were to be arrested and one shot dead in a gunfight with the police.)

Aside from the killings and the extent of the conspiracy uncovered—bomb factories were found in at least two places, one in New Jersey and one in the Bronx, along with possible connections between this robbery and recent others like it—what made the events in Nyack particularly electrifying was the social news they carried. Three of the four people apprehended at the scene were famous radicals of the late 60's and early 70's: Kathy Boudin, perhaps the most famous, who had been forced underground in 1970 when the Greenwich Village townhouse in which she and her friends were making bombs blew up, killing three young would-be bombers; Judith Clark, who had served some months in jail for having taking part in an anti-police, anti-war rampage in Chicago, called the "Days of Rage," in 1969 and whose conviction had later been overturned on the ground that the evidence against her was illegally obtained; and David Gilbert, thought to be the father of Miss Boudin's one-year-old son, who was wanted for assaulting a policeman in Colorado and who had been working in New York under an assumed name as a furniture mover. In the persons of these three particularly, followed within days by Jeffrey Jones and Eleanor Raskin, two other familiars from the early 70's, the Weather Underground had somehow come home at last.

Others, of course, had already been caught and had served prison terms of various lengths, mostly brief. Like Jane Alpert (who was not strictly speaking a member of the Weather Underground), some had given themselves up a few years earlier. Mark Rudd, of Columbia revolution and "Days of Rage" fame, came back to the straight world in 1977; he was fined $2,000 and given two years' probation. Cathy Wilkerson, daughter of the man whose house had been blown up in Greenwich Village, surfaced in 1980. She is serving a three-year term. And most recently, there were Bernardine Dohrn and William Ayers. Like Kathy Boudin, Bernardine Dohrn had been a leading spokesman of the group and remained a leader underground; she, too, was fined and put on probation. William Ayers by the time of his return was a free man, the charges against him having been dropped some years ago.

A number of others, dearly wanted by the police, remain at large. Prominent among these is Marilyn Jean Buck, suspected of involvement in the Nyack operation and otherwise notable for being both "quartermaster" and the only white member of the Black Liberation Army. (How high a distinction this continues to be is somewhat questionable. There are many indications, including the racial mixture of the Nyack team, that various underground groups, black and white, have lately coalesced to some degree.) Even more prominent is Joanne Chesimard, reigning spirit of the Black Liberation Army, who escaped in a bold and efficient manner after being sent to prison for the murder of a state trooper and who has successfully eluded a dogged police hunt ever since.

NEVERTHELESS, the capture of Kathy Boudin and her fellows on that bloody afternoon in October had about it the quality of a grand finale. The rest of the comrades-in-arms may or may not be apprehended. There may or may not turn out to have been a whole network of connections in the radical netherworld. These are police matters, to be settled (or to fail of settlement) by police measures. As far as the rest of society is concerned, though, the Nyack melee has become a kind of watershed event. In a few dramatic moments it seems to have transformed the radical underground from its former status as a romantic ember of things past to a concrete present social fact—as hard-edged and undeniable as the crime of murder itself. Indeed, one was startled to be reminded by the New York *Times* editorial of October 23 that in the years of Vietnam protest the Weathermen alone were responsible for a minimum of twenty bombings (including that of the United States Capitol) and several deaths. At the time, these numbers were never so flatly stated; suddenly they were being mentioned as a record well-known to everybody.

Those who had for so long spoken of radical violence as a response to the moment, the wild outgrowth of an after all legitimate grievance on the part of America's youth about a criminal war and an unjust society, were evidently now prepared to confront bombs and bullets and killings outside their former mythic context. To paraphrase Marianne Moore's haunting metaphor, these things and the people who used them had become real toads in a newly imaginable garden. The result was a journalistic explosion of analysis, gossip, and speculation almost pornographic in its attention to the details of conspiracy. The further result was that the grown children led away in handcuffs from the scene of the carnage in Nyack—some of them, like Kathy Boudin, parents themselves now—were stripped of any remaining resemblance to the children who had bolted in 1970. "The horror they elicit in us," wrote Paul Berman in the *Village Voice* (October 28-November 3), "comes not only from their brutality but from the glimpse they have given us into the cobwebs in their minds." Berman's sentiment, that Boudin and Co. are not only brutal killers but crazy, was echoed again and again, in public and private, in word and by implication. From the New York *Times* all the way to the *Voice*, those who spoke of Kathy Boudin and her comrades both deplored and dismissed them as

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some kind of mad aberration come out from under the rock of dark criminality.

This was certainly not the universal sentiment of 1970, however many pious declarations of opposition to violence had accompanied it. "Cobwebs" were the last thing (and particularly in Paul Berman's publication) the young radicals of the Left were charged then with having in their minds. If anything, they were held to be suffering from a harmful overabundance of clarity. Cobwebs on the brain, or to use the New York *Times*'s less fanciful formulation, "lunacy," was in those years almost invariably imputed to others: to the authorities, or the "society," that had driven the Weathermen to such desperate action.

In 1975, for example, three highly regarded filmmakers, Emile de Antonio, Mary Lampson, and Haskell Wexler made a film called *Underground*, for which they spent several days, presumably underground themselves, filming and taping a group of five Weathermen: Kathy Boudin, William Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, Jeffrey Jones, and Cathy Wilkerson. The five were pleased to expound freely and at length on their views.* From the transcript, it is clear that their interviewers had many sympathetically challenging questions to ask, about the townhouse explosion, about the bombing of the Capitol, about the fear of being apprehended, and about how a white, middle-class group could be revolutionaries. (In answer to this last, put by de Antonio, there is a brief lecture on the distinction between "class origin"—something the group requires a "lifetime struggle" to overcome—and "class stance," that is, their voluntary fealty to the workers of the world.) *Underground* was no first-run hit, but on the other hand neither did it become a public scandal by virtue of any "horror" it elicited in the community of the Left for whom Paul Berman claims to speak. The film was no doubt taken, in the words of the *Soho News* editorial introduction to the transcript, as "a remarkable public record of [the Weathermen's] private passion for making history." It was given to Jeffrey Jones to define, in the film, the nature of the history referred to. "No revolution," he says, "can take place successfully without an armed confrontation with the state."

Such doctrine is hardly unfamiliar to people living at our end of the 20th century. Nor, though it did receive a certain amount of public denunciation, was it so beyond the pale in 1975 as to have earned the word "lunacy." From the lips of the media's favorite black militants, for instance, talk of armed insurrection had long since become TV talk-show chit-chat—a bit flat from overuse, perhaps, but hardly a glimpse of "cobwebs," unless they be the cobwebs of stale piety.

In October 1981, however, the idea of killing policemen and blowing up public property in order to stir hatred for capitalist injustice was found to be quite inexcusable. Like the drunk in Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights*, the media had awakened sober to the cold light of day and were turning the Tramp out of the house. And like the drunk again, their method of ejection showed neither remorse nor embarrassment. The Weathermen, the Panthers, the May 19th Coalition—the name by which the amalgam of terrorist groups elected to call themselves after 1979—were simply stripped of any connection to the Left.

The Brink's robbers were, said the New York *Times* editorial of October 23, "spurned" by the black and women's movements, "clumsy," "inchoate," "never . . . precise in defining The Enemy." "Their only real skill, in fact, was masterly manipulation of the media." In answer to the question posed by *Newsweek* (November 3) as to whether, in view of the fact that many of them had been to Cuba with the Venceremos cane-cutting brigade, they might have received aid or training from Castro, Carl Oglesby, a former president of SDS, confidently said no. The Cubans may have stolen their hearts for a time but not their minds†. Alexander Cockburn, no enemy of leftist violence, brushed the Brink's killers off in his *Village Voice* "Press Clips" column by referring to a "cul de sac [down which] those crazed people in Rockland County had long since plunged, like the Japanese soldiers occasionally still found on some Pacific island, still making their own personal contribution to the Second World War."

BUT it was Sheldon S. Wolin, professor at Princeton and editor of *democracy* magazine, who provided by far the most interesting example of the effort to cut Kathy Boudin and her comrades off from their radical legacy. On the New York *Times* Op Ed page of November 3, Professor Wolin distinguished between real leftist terrorism and the Brink's-robbery variety. Real leftist terrorism, he pointed out, "tends to select its victims for their symbolic value, but for the terrorist act to convey the desired meaning a specifically political context is required." This is not, he hastened to add, "meant to justify terror or violence but to underscore the absence of context in the Brink's murders. The holdup . . . was gratuitous, without manifestoes or ideological preliminaries, devoid of immediate political symbolism." Presumably, then, had they stuck to the business of bombing the Capitol and assaulting policemen, the members of the underground would have remained authentic terrorists aimed, exactly as the police and FBI maintained, at "establishing a socialist state." But in Nyack they had shown themselves to be off the

*Excerpts from this taping were published in the November 3, 1981 issue of the *Soho News*.

†Hearts or minds, they returned from Cuba in 1969-70 ready to take up the gun. And according to many reliable sources, notable among them Lucinda Franks, once they became fugitives the Cuban Mission became one of the points of contact through which they could keep in touch with one another.

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deep end, gone, in Professor Wolin's parlance, in their "arrogance" and "elitism" and "anti-politics."

To be sure, even authentic leftist violence, with its "political context" made manifest, is not Professor Wolin's dish of tea. He is, as readers of *democracy* know, a believer in the kind of radicalism to which he and his associates have affixed the cheerful name "participatory democracy." And the utopia in which he intends mankind to live is evidently so Edenic in its bounty that armed robbery is thought of there only as lacking in symbolism. That the concrete political end of this robbery was the acquisition of $1.6 million, a nice bit of wherewithal for carrying on the revolution, seems not to have occurred to him (nor was it mentioned by the other innocents who found the conduct of the underground so "inchoate" and "bizarre"). By such reckoning, the young Stalin's activities as a bank robber in his native Georgia were not genuinely revolutionary—a convenient thought for today's radicals, leading as it does by logical extension to the further idea that the bloody outcome in Russia after 1917 was not a "genuine revolution" either. But whether or not Stalin is retroactively to be deprived of his standing as a true revolutionary on the grounds of his extremely antisocial behavior—something many radicals have in fact attempted to do since the 1930's—there is no question that in the autumn of 1981 the American radical underground unequivocally was deprived of that standing by all who took up the issue.

II

Is it true that, having begun in comprehensible, albeit misguided, rage, the Weathermen had by this time simply gone mad? While they were hiding out, had life, the world, history passed them by to the point where they could no longer tell the real from rhetoric-frenzied fantasy? Kathy Boudin, caught running away, was reported by her captor to have shouted, "I didn't shoot him! He did! The others did!" Is it possible that until that moment of involuntary emotional truth—after all, she did have a year-old baby waiting for her return from the afternoon's outing—she had just plain been unable to take the measure, or calculate the risk, of what she had undertaken to do? Jeffrey Jones and Eleanor Raskin, who were not in Nyack but had because of the Nyack investigation been taken by the police a few days later, were reported to have been holding hands and smiling at their bail hearing. They have a four-year-old child. Could their smiles have meant that they were not able even now to comprehend what might become of them and, even more important, of their child? (Parenthood is far from irrelevant here. Lucinda Franks, a radical journalist who had earned the confidence of the Weathermen sufficiently to move at relative ease among them, reported in a piece in the New York *Times Magazine* ["The Seeds of Terror," November 22] that their children were one of the major reasons for Cathy Wilkerson's and Bernardine Dohrn's having given themselves up.)

The question, then, begs to be answered: if they had gone beyond bounds to a place where even their one-time ardent radical sympathizers refused to follow bearing gifts of understanding and exculpation, what had pushed them to so definitive a crossing? In answer to this question Jane Alpert's book—otherwise one of the more empty and dishonest documents of the age—is invaluable. The one impersonal thing Miss Alpert makes clear, amid a welter of personal "confessions" that betray nothing except her undying refusal to face herself, is that living the underground radical life would not by itself have driven anyone to the point of madness. It was a life of difficulty and dissembling, lived at a very low standard of amenity and stability, but one of the most striking things about it was how little it differed from the life that large numbers of the Weathermen's contemporaries had opted to live aboveground. They moved a great deal, depended on the hospitality, the good offices, and, of course, the hard cash of acquaintances and strangers. They often lived in groups, and spent a great deal of time, energy, and substance in talk. They worked sporadically at odd, usually menial, jobs, or went on welfare. They now and then, if and when the contact could be arranged, got money from home. They managed throughout to maintain a steady traffic in "relationships," particularly sexual ones. And they were utterly, unsparingly grandiose about the significance of every breath they drew.

Lucinda Franks's description of the White Panther commune in Ann Arbor, Michigan, also a hideout for fugitive Weathermen, could but for one detail be the description of many a 1970's farmhouse in Vermont, New Mexico, California, and many an apartment or even dormitory in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Berkeley: ". . . the lighting is dim, mattresses are scattered about on the dusty floor, The smells are reminiscent of a bazaar: overripe fruit, marijuana, baby formula, gasoline from freshly mixed Molotov cocktails. . . . Men, women, and children wander about the rooms as aimlessly as house cats. They eat when hungry, sleep when tired." The Molotov cocktails, to be sure, constituted a significant difference, but how significant? While very few of America's allegedly angry, alienated young "idealists" could be, or were, up to using them, certainly at the time there was no very great shock or outrage at them either.

Another difference was that those who lived underground were forced to disguise themselves, assume false identities, avoid the police, and confine themselves to using pay phones. Yet can anyone, in view of the stories that have been com-

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ing to light for something like five years now, deny that in the United States of America the long arm of the law had, as far as the country's radicals were concerned, grown arthritic and feeble? People whose faces remained on Most Wanted posters for years went about their business, not only bombing and demonstrating but getting jobs, applying for welfare, settling among neighbors. Before she gave herself up, Jane Alpert worked as a secretary in a parochial school for Jewish girls, so endearing herself to the Orthodox rabbi who ran it that when he discovered who she was, he offered to provide her a character reference. The funniest case was that of Abbie Hoffman—the chosen funny man of American radical violence—who turned up from the nether regions bearing two letters of commendation, one from Governor Carey and one from Senator Moynihan (neither of whom had recognized him), for his splendid work in helping to preserve the environment of New York State.

But the most impressive case, anyway so far—for we do not yet know the stories of Joanne Chesimard or Marilyn Jean Buck or the others—is that of Kathy Boudin. She had been living in New York City for several years, most recently sharing an apartment one block from Columbia University with a journalist named Rita Jensen and Mrs. Jensen's two adolescent children. She had a baby, became an AFDC client, worked some of the time as a waitress in the neighborhood, where undoubtedly there were people, holdovers from the 60's and 70's in whom the area abounds, who might have recognized her. Perhaps when she wasn't keeping alive the contacts among her comrades of the May 19th Coalition or plotting actions like the Brink's holdup, she sat with her son Chesa (named for Chesimard) on a bench in Riverside Park sharing child-rearing information as the Riverside Park mothers do. She would have been serious and thorough and full of opinions about it, too. Unlike Bernardine Dohrn, who seems to have had a penchant for wild talk* but after ten years decided to give up on the killing and bombing, Kathy Boudin remained a soldier to the end.

THE point is that those living underground received considerable support, moral and otherwise. On both coasts and in between there were enclaves in which they could move about at ease; there were houses virtually everywhere in which they found shelter; and above all, there was money, money to travel out of town, to travel back, to keep a rendezvous in some far-off bus station, money for cars, money for bail. There was enough money so that Jane Alpert, for example, never did not know where her next meal was coming from. When she heard that Sam Melville had been killed at Attica, she "sent the message" that she wanted to see him again—she was in Denver—and somehow there was plane fare to New York and a place to stay while she sneaked in a vigil by his coffin. Who actually laid out the cash for this, and whether he or she could afford it, Miss Alpert does not deign to say. (In this above all, she and the others remained perfectly recognizable members of their "generation.")

Multiply needs of this kind forty- or fifty-fold, and again by eight, nine, or ten years, and it becomes clear that those underground were not sustaining themselves simply by sharing their meager resources, commune-style, nor were they simply being helped along now and then by their old friends in the East Village. There is no unimpeachable answer, for the present, to the question of whether the American terrorist underground was being funded to any extent by unnamed foreign groups or governments. The FBI says no; other experts say yes. The question is in this particular context irrelevant anyway. What is relevant is that given the need for cars, guns, explosives, safe houses, and other assorted paraphernalia, along with food, shelter, drugs, and a good deal of cross-country transport, *somebody* had to be shelling out . . . and somebody was. Including, it does not seem trivial to point out, the federal, state, and local governments against whom the underground claimed at the time to be leading an armed insurrection.

There was also a continuing and lively political life, among the members of the underground themselves and between the underground and the outer world. Their communiqués were reproduced, distributed, and discussed. There were splits, there were factions, there was all the stuff of ongoing youth-movement interchange. Once, converted by the loving ministrations of Robin Morgan to Miss Morgan's brand of radical feminism, Jane Alpert arranged a meeting in San Francisco with Bernardine Dohrn, in which she tried in turn to convert the then-undisputed leader of the Weathermen. Miss Dohrn, though amiably pretending to ecumenicism, remained unmoved. Later Jane Alpert confronted other Weatherwomen, with whom she clashed outright. Such comings and goings, meetings and exchanges, were never-ending, producing the same private tensions clothed in public concern that had once enlivened many an evening in the dormitories of Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore.†

Lucinda Franks with considerable self-gratulation describes having received a bimonthly publication from the Weathermen in the mail, full of statements, announcements of bombings, and the

*Lucinda Franks quotes her as saying about Charles Manson's group after the murder of Sharon Tate, "Dig it, first they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them, then they even shoved a fork into a victim's stomach. Wild!"

†One of the most fascinating and least noted things about the radical underground is the extent to which it has always been spurred on, led, and directed by women. What this means about the condition of the American soul is a question it would be most fruitful to ponder.

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inevitable poems, and carefully destroying the envelopes in order to have no helpful evidence should the FBI ever come around. If there is any illegality in such behavior, it seems not to concern Miss Franks, for she spoke of it in no less public a place than the New York *Times*.

In other words, this political life at innumerable points both touched and was touched by the ordinary daylight activism of the time. The Weather Underground had reason to feel themselves members, even cherished members, of an ongoing larger community.

Jane Alpert does speak over and over again of her loneliness, but always and only in connection with her envy for other people *in the underground*. She had not herself been a Weatherman; her little band of co-conspirators seems to have been closer to the group that called itself The Crazies. And then, of course, she was to become a radical feminist, among other things causing a stir with a document, written under the direct tutelage of Robin Morgan (who lived out in the open), in which she in effect declared herself content that Sam Melville was dead. Still, she was treated with camaraderie and admiration by her Weather fellow fugitives: she was after all a celebrity of bombing. Cathy Wilkerson, one afternoon in San Francisco, looked deep into her eyes and told her she was "extraordinary." Bernardine Dohrn was gracious and flattering. Mark Rudd, encountered in her travels, lusted for her body. Others protected her, sheltered her, encouraged her. Indeed, the loneliness she complains of is exactly the same as the sense of herself she undoubtedly sighed over at the age of twelve: a constant theme running through her reminiscences is that everyone else had everything—friends, love, beauty, even enviable troubles—and she had nothing.

HER own all-too-familiar addiction to self aside, Miss Alpert's account of the underground, without her meaning it to, underlines one generally overlooked point. What sent everybody but the hardest of the hard core back up to the surface sooner or later was the dawning recognition that the world was prepared to go easy on him. To begin with, certain of the people living underground were there as volunteers; they were along for the ride. They had merely to take back their real identities and go home. And as time passed, the others learned that charges had been dropped or that sentences would be suspended or light. Even as early as her meeting with Jane Alpert in San Francisco, which must have taken place in spring or summer of 1972, Bernardine Dohrn mentioned that some of the Weathermen were working in the McGovern campaign. "If McGovern can win the nomination and election," she said, *"it's possible we won't even need an underground any more"* (emphasis added). McGovern, we know, did not win the election, and the last stragglers did not return until 1980, but the seeds of the idea that they would be treated with leniency were unmistakably there.

How could they not be? Those underground had screamed themselves hoarse about pig policemen but their own real experiences were of a culture that truckled to them. There may be no more telling story about America's privileged young terrorists than the story told by Lucinda Franks about what happened to Kathy Boudin on the day she narrowly missed being blown up in the Greenwich Village townhouse on West 11th Street. Dazed and nearly naked, she ran to the house of a neighbor who gave her clothes and let her wash up. Then she made one of her infrequent visits to her own home. Her mother, by way of what Miss Franks calls "reestablishing rapport" with her mysteriously errant daughter, reported to the girl that there had been a big fire on West 11th Street and that in their usual fashion the fire department had rushed in force to put out the fire at a rich townhouse while they let the tenements of the ghettos burn away. Now, Mrs. Boudin was the wife, and Kathy the daughter, of a very famous left-wing lawyer, Leonard Boudin. The press has in connection with the Brinks case consistently referred to Leonard Boudin as a "civil-rights" lawyer, but he has in fact earned his notability as a defender not of civil rights but of numerous famous radicals and Communists. Thus all her life Kathy had ample reason to be perfectly aware of her parents' political attitudes. Yet *even* Mrs. Boudin seemed to feel it necessary to seek favor with her daughter by reciting her pledge of political allegiance.

Here was the promise that the Weathermen took with them on their adventures underground, the promise that they would in the end be appeased and placated. As it happened, Kathy Boudin herself was to ignore that promise, but most of the others must have tucked it away for safekeeping at the bottom of consciousness. They were finally not to be disappointed.

All of which is to say that the line between the licit and the illicit for America's young radicals was hardly a serious or carefully drawn boundary. As the anti-war movement was tranquilized by the ending of the draft, so the fugitives were to succumb to the seductive power of the exclusionary rule.

III

EXCEPT for the ones who did not succumb—Boudin, Clark, Gilbert, and Company. According to Lucinda Franks, in 1979 the Weather Underground split into two factions, the Prairie Fire Collective, who were set on going home, and the May 19th Coalition, who decided to join up with the black terrorists. This would presumably have been the point at which in the view of their former radical sympathizers the

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Boudin group slipped their moorings and became demented thugs. It has been customary for those who write of them to speak of their "rage"—rage at their inability to affect the world, rage at having grown up privileged, rage at having been born white, rage at . . . the litany intones itself by rote. Without their former movement and comrades, it is clearly implied, their rage for ideals turned in upon itself and became sheer ugliness, ending in the spilled blood of innocents. Everyone says it: they speak for no one any more.

Yet the blood of innocents had been spilled before. The wonder is—a tribute to the Weathermen's ineptitude, maybe—that more had not been spilled. It is difficult to believe that back there in the mists of the late 60's and 70's the thought had not crossed the minds of, say, Paul Berman or Lucinda Franks that bombs and Molotov cocktails could kill people. Possibly they were under the impression that bombs were only symbols, like Vietcong flags and bags of urine. And what about bullets, the preferred instruments of death at Nyack? Surely no one risking jail to protest the use of bullets by the United State Army could think they had any other purpose than killing. Even if the Weathermen did not make use of bullets in those halcyon days of rage and idealism, the Black Panthers did. But the Panthers, too, were heroes of "social change."

The truth about the post-Nyack response to the Weathermen is exactly the opposite of what is being said. Kathy Boudin has been consigned to outer darkness by the liberals who once "understood" her and the radicals who once apologized for her not because she abandoned her revolutionary ideals but precisely because she refused to do so.

The radical youth movement, for whatever reason, was out to destroy the system and with it, the country. They said so, and behaved accordingly. That they failed says something about their own lack of skill and even more about our stability but nothing whatever about their intentions. By the system, they meant capitalism, republican democracy, and the American way of life. They sought to render us chaotic within and unable to defend ourselves without. There is nothing innovative about this and nothing that need take our breath away: it is the standard agenda of revolution. Kathy Boudin and her friends remained loyal to it.

Revolution is something Americans are fated, or blessed, to think of light-mindedly. Everything—a new piece of technology, an evanescent demographic datum, a change of manners, a shift in ethnic political balance, even a move to the country—has at one time or another been heralded as a "revolution." On the other hand, faced with the actually revolutionary, we blind ourselves and call it something else—either innocent idealism or insanity. Revolution as a political fact, though we have in our lifetime witnessed an ever-accelerating number of them, in countries near and far, we have somehow not permitted to penetrate our consciousness of reality.

Boudin's critics on the Left, in comforting and willful ignorance of the evidence of the past sixty years, feel no need to take responsibility for any of the consequences of all their own free and easy chatter about bringing down the system. As for her liberal critics, they feel no need to take responsibility for any consequences of a decade's worth of psychological denial and cultural appeasement. Both groups have declared the real article to be an aberration and congratulated themselves for having come through unscathed, their moral superiority intact.

It remains to be seen how large a price Kathy Boudin and the others will have to pay for carrying what had so widely been regarded as youthful fun and games to their ghastly, and undeniable, logical conclusion.

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Israel and the Messiah

Jacob Katz

THE prayer for the well-being of the state of Israel which is recited on Sabbaths and festivals in most synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora calls the state "*reshit geulatenu*," the commencement of our redemption. The formula implies that the creation of the state of Israel is to be viewed as the initial fulfillment of the messianic expectation cherished by past generations.

The text of the prayer was written by the Hebrew novelist S.Y. Agnon at the request of Isaac Herzog, chief rabbi at the time the state was founded. It has since had to be repeatedly defended by Orthodox authorities against those who find it inappropriate or even sacrilegious.

Some who are opposed to the formula, like the sect of Neturei Karta in Israel and their supporters abroad, deny any legitimacy at all to the Jewish state. Others, like the Orthodox party Agudat Israel and the heads of noted *yeshivot*, cooperate with the agencies of the state, accept the benefits derived from its institutions, and at times support the government in return, but still withhold fundamental spiritual approval. Where the more radical regard modern Israel as the very antithesis of the messianic redemption promised by Jewish tradition, the less radical declare the issue irrelevant. But for either camp, to use messianic vocabulary in praying for the welfare of the state borders on desecration of a hallowed religious concept.

This theological and ideological controversy obviously cannot be settled except in its own terms. The question that a historian may address is not whether the state of Israel is worthy of association with the traditional messianic concept but whether a connection can in fact be drawn between the messianic hope entertained by Jews through the ages and the modern national movement that led to the founding of Israel. In order to approach this question we have to inquire first into the nature of traditional messianism.

ALTHOUGH the term itself is biblical in origin, messianism is a universal phenomenon. Tribes and nations of disparate cultural traditions and differing levels of civilization in many parts of the world have cherished the idea of a savior who will deliver them from their present physical or spiritual circumstances. But within the orbit of the immediate influence of Judaism, and especially in Christianity and Islam, the idea of messianic deliverance assumed a novel significance, albeit one that was to differ sharply from the Jewish prototype.

The specific historical conditions that lay behind the biblical image of an anointed ideal king (the original meaning of "messiah") need not concern us here. Probably as early as the Babylonian captivity, but certainly after the destruction of the Second Temple, the plight that required redemption was mainly not that of the Jews of Palestine but that of the Jews in exile. And the plight was not economic scarcity, social degradation, or spiritual decadence, although all these at times may have been experienced as adversities to be overcome by the redeemer. Once in exile, the Jews tended to understand these sufferings as mere byproducts of a basic deficiency, namely, exile itself, the condition of banishment.

Now, being removed from one's birthplace or country of origin is a misfortune only if one's commitment to that birthplace is so intense that any other place is experienced as a physical and spiritual trial. Uncounted numbers of people in human history have changed their dwelling through voluntary or forced emigration and in the fullness of time have accustomed themselves to the situation and adopted a new fatherland. It is one of the peculiarities of the Jews' fate, conditioned by many complex religious and historical factors, that despite the lengthy passage of time the consciousness of exile did not disappear. On the contrary, duration intensified rather than mitigated the subjective experience of calamity.

Messianism was both the cause and the result of the Jews' segregated existence throughout the cen-

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turies of exile. Initially the messianic belief may have strengthened their will to resist absorption by a foreign environment. Once the Jewish community established itself as a segregated socio-religious entity, its pariah-like situation nourished expectations of an ultimate return to its own homeland.

This dependence of Jewish messianism on the concrete situation of exile sets it apart from the millenarian fantasies of other socially or nationally suppressed groups. At the same time it distinguishes it from the purely spiritual longings of the Christian Second Coming. Jewish messianism has a point of reference in the factual history of the Jewish people. Jews had at one time lived in their own country, their own commonwealth; it was there they hoped to return in the messianic age.

In fact, a residue of the former national existence continued to play an active role in the cultural and mental life of every Jewish community. Acquaintance with the geographical scenes and contours of the homeland through constant reading of the Bible lent tangibility to the longings of return. More important perhaps was the fact that Jews continued to study and adhere to the laws of the Mishnah, which reflect the realities of life in the period of the Second Temple (when they were codified) but served long thereafter as a guide to important aspects of individual and communal conduct. The intellectual elite dedicated itself to the study of a body of law which, taken as a whole, would function once again when the nation was living under its own government in the projected messianic age. Various elements in the life of the community thus linked the memory of the past with the expectation of the future, keeping the vision of the messianic era in contact with historical reality.

ALTHOUGH it was exceptional in its concreteness, Jewish messianism did share with all forms of millenarianism an imaginary conception of the means to be employed in bringing about the redemption. Having failed to restore independence through military action in Roman times (the last serious attempt was the Bar Kochba revolt in 132 C.E.), Jews ceded their fate to the unfathomable wisdom of divine Providence. This shift in the mental attitude of the nation was not the consequence of a mere ideological development. The circumstances in which Jews lived in the Middle Ages restricted their freedom of action to sporadic interventions on the local level. Any attempt to alter the basic situation of a scattered and barely-tolerated people was simply inconceivable. No wonder, then, that Jewish faith in an ultimate redemption became interwoven with a belief in supernatural agency. What the human partner could contribute was, at most, intercession with the celestial power in order to hasten the redemption.

There were in the main two avenues for inducing heaven to bring about salvation. (We may disregard the purely magical machinations of kabbalists.) One was to gain divine grace by complying perfectly with the obligatory religious duties as these were interpreted by Jewish tradition. In this approach, redemption would follow not upon any one particular religious or spiritual undertaking but upon the achievement of total religious perfection by the community at large. Others, however, found indications in the authoritative sources of some special deed or procedure that might avail. Thus, in 1538 the scholars of Safed made an abortive attempt to reestablish the ancient Sanhedrin as the first act in the messianic drama; in doing so they were following a suggestion of Maimonides as to the sequence of events preceding the appearance of the messiah. A similar phenomenon was the hasty marrying-off of young couples during the feverish excitement occasioned by rumors of the impending messianic revelation of Sabbatai Zevi in 1666. (According to a saying in the Talmud, all the souls yet to be born have to reach their destiny before the messiah can appear. Mass marriages were meant literally to fulfill this condition.) As late as the 1830's Rabbi Zevi Hirsh Kalisher, later to become a steadfast advocate of Jewish settlement in Palestine and as such a veritable precursor of modern Zionism, was still addicted to this pattern of thought. Kalisher wished to obtain permission from the Turkish authorities, as well as the consent of his rabbinical colleagues, to institute a certain kind of animal sacrifice on the site of the Jerusalem Temple; on the basis of his scholarly research he believed that the restoration of animal sacrifice was a precondition for initiating the messianic process.

In the concept of supernatural redemption, as these examples suggest, human initiative was consistently restricted to spiritual or ritualistic devices. The possibility, or for that matter the permissibility, of a national restoration through human means was hardly ever discussed or debated. At most it was referred to in a homiletic or exegetic context (not always negatively). At bottom lay an acquiescence in the passive role Jewry was supposed to play as a nation in exile, at the mercy of others.

THE spell of this state of mind was broken in the 18th and 19th centuries when the Jews acquired citizenship owing to the revolutionary changes in some of the nations in which they lived. Citizenship meant an end to the condition of exile in an absolutely unforeseen and therefore most confusing way.

Accepting citizenship in a non-Jewish state was regarded both by the Jews and by their emancipators as incompatible with the messianic belief which was an uncontested article of Jewish faith. Jews were more or less explicitly requested to renounce this tenet—no easy thing to do, although the impediment was not so much dogma as the role the idea had played in Jewish history. Indeed, there

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was a minority opinion recorded in the Talmud which confined the notion of the messiah to biblical times alone, and denied its significance for the future. This talmudic authority was cited by Lazarus Bendavid, a spokesman of the radical Enlightenment in late 18th-century Berlin, to refute a Catholic missionary who had observed that the Jews, having thrown away a cornerstone of their religious system in return for their emancipation, ought logically to accept the Christian redeemer. Bendavid retorted that the Jewish religion remained intact even without the messianic belief. As if on second thought, he added that Jewish messianism had anyway found its fulfillment in the liberation of the Jews by the rulers of contemporary states.

Bendavid's convoluted argument can be said to reflect the intellectual predicament in which Jews found themselves in the wake of their changed situation. Their political status may have required them to abandon the messianic tenet, yet other, less conspicuous, considerations militated against it. The need to meet the Christian challenge in a positive way, rejecting the Christian messiah while retaining a Jewish version of messianism, was one such consideration. The main reason, however, was an internal one: the messianic ideal was deeply ingrained in the Jewish mentality. Simply to try to eradicate it because of the changed political circumstances would have been a futile enterprise. What was possible was a reinterpretation, which is what Bendavid proposed.

His response to the historical situation became typical for succeeding generations. Although the Jews' integration into the modern state was not the result of an internal Jewish development, it still represented a decisive turn in their destiny and they were inclined to understand it in terms of traditional concepts. Emancipation seen as the fulfillment of the expected messianic redemption was admittedly a forced interpretation, but understandable in light of events. It is astonishing how many Jews who experienced emancipation from the ghetto almost instinctively described the event in terms drawn from the vocabulary of traditional Jewish messianism. Such emancipating rulers as Napoleon and the Emperor Joseph II of Austria were compared explicitly with the biblical Cyrus, and the dawning of the Enlightenment was frequently portrayed as the equivalent of the messianic age.

Still, when reform-minded theologians drew the practical implications and proposed omitting references in Jewish ritual to the future return to Zion, they met with fierce opposition. Not only the Orthodox but also the exponents of the so-called historical school objected. Granting the quasi-messianic significance of Jewish emancipation, they were still reluctant to repudiate the idea of a possible national redemption, even if projected into a remote and hazy future.

By the early 1860's political emancipation in Western countries could already be taken for granted; at the same time it could be transcended, at least by those of broader vision who, although they welcomed Jewish emancipation, were reluctant to see in it the consummation of Jewish history. Two such thinkers were Rabbi Kalisher and Rabbi Yehudah Alkalay.

Kalisher was an outstanding Ashkenazi talmudist, Alkalay a Sephardi preacher. Both were at the outset imbued with traditional messianism; in the course of time both integrated the historical experience of their age into their thinking. Jewish emancipation, really the antithesis of the traditional messianic expectation, came to be seen by them as the initial phase in an evolving process of redemption. The social elevation of the Jewish individual became a precondition for collective national liberation.

By dint of this rethinking, the very definition of redemption underwent a change. The human initiative destined to usher in the messianic age was no longer seen in spiritual or ritualistic terms. The establishment of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the tangible political influence of Jewish notables like Moses Montefiore and the Rothschilds were taken to suggest that the resettlement of Jews in their ancient homeland by human means was not impossible. Such attempts at resettlement were regarded as necessary to the messianic enterprise; it was expected that a divine response would follow and complete the process.

That this reinterpretation of the messianic tradition was no mere idiosyncrasy is demonstrated by the fact that it was advanced independently (with some variations) by different people and, once published, found a following. In 1862, when Kalisher published a tract setting forth his views, he seems not to have been acquainted with the writings of Alkalay—no surprise, in view of the geographic distance and the difference in background that separated them. (Kalisher lived in the East Prussian town of Thorn, Alkalay in the town of Semelin near Belgrade.) Kalisher was not even aware of the existence of an Ashkenazi preacher, Nathan Friedland, who pursued a similar trend on his own, although he presented it in a more homiletic fashion. It was Friedland who detected the affinity between his own thinking and that of his more famous contemporary and, encouraged by the coincidence, gave his thought a more direct and daring expression. More important perhaps for Kalisher's own self-confidence was the unconditional approval which he received from his rabbinical colleague Elijah Guttmacher. A secluded scholar and kabbalist, Guttmacher was reputed to be a miracle-working saint; when he announced unequivocally that the appropriate means to pave the way for the coming of the messiah was to repopulate Palestine, it could not fail to impress many Jews.

We thus have here a new development in Jewish

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thinking, of which the main characteristic is the permission or even the demand for the partial realization of the messianic vision by human effort. Obviously this development did not occur in a vacuum but had to do with the impact of historical events: the unexpected and in traditional terms inexplicable emancipation of the Jews as well as the contemporaneous resurrection of the European nations. But there was equally a dialectical development within Jewish messianism itself. In particular it is impossible to ignore the deep emotional dimension which accompanied the emergence of the ideas we have discussed.

In the thought of Moses Hess, who joined the group of these early Zionists as a secular outsider, we find a similar melange of cognitive and emotional elements. A socialist ideologue estranged from Judaism since his youth, Hess at the age of fifty recovered his Jewish commitment and evolved a theory of what Judaism could still signify beyond the two contemporary variations of Reform and Neo-Orthodoxy. He advocated a national restoration in the ancient homeland, and was strongly convinced that such an ingathering would release the spiritual energy embodied in petrified religious institutions. The national revival of Italy, and contemporary intellectual trends which encouraged the revitalization of dormant historical sources, obviously had an influence on Hess. But there is also no missing his messianic sentiments. A vision of a redeemed and rehabilitated Judaism had been implanted in Hess's mind as a child, when he observed his grandfather mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. His messianic vision drew its emotional power from that long suppressed childhood experience. Thus, although they differed over what would happen once the first stage of the redemptive process was accomplished, Hess and the Orthodox messianists were partisans of the same cause. And they also agreed about the immediate task: the ingathering of Jews in Palestine.

DESPITE remarkable exertions by Alkalay and Kalisher, very little, if anything, was accomplished on this score. Nevertheless, the concrete history of the Jewish national movement has to be dated from the appearance of this group. The vestiges of their influence can be traced in the years up to the emergence of the Hovevei Zion movement in the wake of the 1881 pogroms in Russia.

That movement, which defined its objective as the restoration and rehabilitation of the Jewish nation in its historical homeland, crystallized under the impact of the pogroms, but it could do so because the idea of a national revival had been adopted by at least certain sections of the population. The dissemination of the nationalist idea owed much to the expansion of the Hebrew press, headed by the weekly *Ha-Maggid*, which catered to a widely scattered Hebrew reading public, especially in Russia and Romania. Traditional yet open-minded, it appealed to a new type of Jew who transcended traditional attitudes.

The example of emancipated Western Jewry, as well as the repeated attempts by the Russian government to extricate Jews from their traditional cultural and occupational patterns, made people aware that changes in their situation were possible through their own initiatives and efforts. A readiness to act in the public interest was often combined with an Enlightenment vision of a future based on the Western model: political emancipation, social acceptance, and cultural accommodation. But this projected ideal stood in stark contrast to reality; the Jewish community in Russia and for that matter in Romania was a politically underprivileged, socially segregated, and culturally self-reliant minority. As it happens, however, the vision of Jewish integration as the ultimate destiny of the community had already been discarded by thinkers who were in direct contact with Western countries where it had originally emerged.

The chief exponent of the new trend was the novelist, Peretz Smolenskin. A militant critic of social and religious conditions especially in Russia, the land of his birth, Smolenskin fought for his convictions through his literary creations and his journalistic writings, both appearing in the monthly *Ha-Shahar* which he edited in Vienna from 1868 on. Attacking the rabbinical as well as the lay leadership of his time, Smolenskin laid the blame for all shortcomings on the Berlin Haskalah (Enlightenment) and the subsequent Reform movement in Germany. The erosion of Jewish national unity and of the intrinsic link between social life and religion derived from these early developments, in Smolenskin's view. The mechanical tampering with religious tradition, especially the excision of symbols connected to the future rebirth of the nation, had sapped the vital forces of the community and led to the present dismal state of affairs. At the same time, the "reward" for these reforms, the integration of the Jews as equals in the surrounding society, never stood a chance of realization.

Erroneous and unjust as this criticism may be historically, its significance for its time cannot be overrated. It amounted to a repudiation of all that the Haskalah stood for, namely, the hope that Russian Jews could improve their status by emulating the ways of their brethren in the West. Smolenskin had no alternative proposals for either the religious or the political problems of the community. Opposed to Reform, he was at the same time scandalized by the traditional rabbinate; he believed that by turning away from assimilation the community might somehow dispense with the excesses in its tradition and retain only the essentials. As for politics, Smolenskin lacked a substitute for the Haskalah belief in civic emancipation. When he

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first unfolded his views, the idea of settlement in Palestine did not yet occupy his mind. He strongly recommended the reestablishment of national unity and the regaining of trust in the national future as the basis for any collective action, which would then automatically follow. These ideas laid the groundwork for the political program of national revival in the homeland which emerged in the wake of the pogroms of the 1880's. Smolenskin himself then became an active supporter of the Hovevei Zion.

Others had made this transition before the pogroms broke out. The assistant editor (and from 1880 the chief editor) of *Ha-Maggid*, David Gordon, impressed both by Rabbi Kalisher and by Moses Hess, and like Smolenskin opposed to the anti-nationalism of the Reform movement, defended Jewish nationalism on the modern principle that each nation should adhere to its own customs, language, and laws. How much weight in this scheme would be given to each attribute could not be authoritatively prescribed. Indeed, with the spread of the national ideal, different configurations evolved, with some assigning religion a central role and others restricting its scope or giving it up altogether in favor of other components in the national heritage.

Traces of this intellectual development became evident during the first flowering of the national movement after the pogroms of 1881, when there arose a broad consensus that at least a certain part of Russian Jewry would have to leave the country. America was the obvious goal of emigration: it was a country known to be prepared to absorb newcomers, and a contingent of Russian Jews had already settled there in the years preceding the pogroms. But Palestine was suggested as an alternative, and a prolonged and passionate debate went on for years over the relative merits of the two.

That a land lacking all the attributes which made America attractive could enter this competition at all was testimony to the previous spreading of the idea that only there could the Jews pursue their national destiny. This in turn was clearly a derivation of the messianic vision of Eretz Israel as the locale for the miraculous reestablishment of the ancient Jewish commonwealth. The emotional commitment to Palestine was all the stronger for having undergone a process of secularization.

The choice of Palestine may reveal still another indebtedness to traditional messianism. So little was known about the difficulties of life there that the decision to settle in Palestine must be taken as an emphatically irrational act. The only compensation for ignorance was belief in the predetermined destiny that tied the Jewish people to the Holy Land, a destiny which guaranteed the success of the enterprise. For the secular pioneers, the notion of historical inevitability replaced the faith in divine promise held by the Orthodox thinkers. In both cases, however, we see the operation of what may be called messianic determinism.

The messianic impulse did not exhaust its momentum with the first wave of emigrants. On the contrary, subsequent events contributed new stimuli that worked in the same direction. The awareness that Jewish life was being restored in the Holy Land almost automatically evoked images from the Bible that lent themselves to explicit messianic interpretation. In July 1882 Marcus Lehmann, the editor of *Israelit*, the organ of German Orthodoxy, convened a group of rabbinical and lay leaders of southern Germany to discuss how to assist Russian Jews who had left their country in the wake of the previous year's pogrom. Lehmann opened the session with these words: "It is a wonderful token of the time that a general yearning for the Holy Land has seized a countless multitude of our co-religionists especially in Russia.... We must heed the hints of divine Providence and pave the way for a Jewish future of the most far-reaching consequences." He cited the biblical examples of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, who, though facing immense difficulties, brought about the establishment of the Second Commonwealth.

Messianic overtones permeated the lives of the early settlers. As the historian Azriel Shochat has argued, even the choice of names for settlements—such as Petah Tikvah (The Door of Hope) or Rishon LeZion (First in Zion)—was guided by a wish to connect the present enterprise with the prophets' vision of Israel's future. Striking biblical passages of unequivocal messianic intent, like Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones brought to life, became a recurring motif in Zionist speeches and writings. This passage appears as the motto of an association founded in Jerusalem in 1882 by Eliezer Ben Yehuda and Yehiel Michael Pines and appropriately called Tehiyat Yisrael, "revival of Israel." Two years later the prophets' vision served as the text for a moving sermon by Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever at the closing session of a Hovevei Zion meeting in Kattowitz. The revival of the dry bones became a Zionist *topos*, occurring independently to many people who were engaged in the revitalization of their nation.

The compelling messianic associations aroused by the national enterprise are also forcefully demonstrated by the negative reaction to them in some Orthodox circles. Secularized Jews could oppose Zionism out of political or other reasons and possibly remain indifferent to the messianic issue. An Orthodox Jew had no such middle course. The explicitly messianic discourse of Kalisher and his circle elicited much resentment in rabbinic circles. Once the movement got under way, it had either to be embraced or rejected.

The rejection by some Orthodox and especially some hasidic authorities was emphatic indeed, assuming almost the character of religious ana-

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thema. The notion of independent human action, which struck at the heart of the traditional supernatural definition of messianism, was denounced as bordering on heresy. Whatever other motives may have been involved in shaping this attitude of total censure—simple conservatism, disquiet over the religious conduct of the settlers, the anticipation of possible failure—central to it was the impulse to protect the sacred concept of messianism from secular trespass.

The leaders of the Hovevei Zion attributed their failure to attract the Jewish masses, especially in hasidic districts, to the almost universal antagonism of the hasidic courts. The non-hasidic authorities were divided among themselves: some belonged to the Zionist movement, others supported or condoned it, still others objected to it or condemned it outright. Yet even the supporters evinced a reservation concerning the messianic interpretation of the movement. Almost to a man, they advocated resettlement of the Holy Land on the basis of the preference given by traditional religious sources to life lived there as opposed to anywhere else. To this formal religious obligation—the positive commandment of settling in Eretz Israel—they sometimes added other considerations of contemporary relevance: the advantages of an agricultural life and the like. These had already been adduced by Kalisher as subsidiary props to his main argument, which was, of course, his messianic concept. His successors in the Hovevei Zion generation ignored the messianic aspect altogether. Abraham Jacob Slucki, who in 1891 published a collection of opinions by noted rabbis on the religious status of the movement, apologized for the fact that there were members of Hovevei Zion who regarded developments in the Holy Land as "the beginning of the redemption."

This neutralizing tendency among official spokesmen of Judaism hardly reflected the popular sentiments that nourished the movement even in its periods of relative stagnation. Those engaged in keeping the Hovevei Zion alive referred to it in correspondence as their "sacred assignment." Such quasi-religious attachment to the idea must have persisted in all the circles which followed the vicissitudes of the movement sympathetically.

The appearance on the scene of Theodor Herzl quickened these latent sentiments. Lending the movement an unhoped-for dimension, he provided the necessary incitement for popular imagination to run high. Herzl possessed all the qualities of a charismatic leader, and was often identified with the messiah in his meetings with the Jewish masses. Such an identification, which amazed Herzl himself, was just as often criticized by the intellectuals in the movement.

THE next opportunity for messianic sentiments to emerge was the traumatic experience of the second wave of pogroms starting in 1903, bloodier by far than the first. With the subsequent failure of the 1905 revolution, the hopes for Jewish integration in a reformed Russia were finally dashed. These events set in motion the greatest exodus of Jews from the country, with the majority of the emigrants once again heading for America. A fraction, however, consisting of young men and women with strong convictions, chose to join the early settlers in Palestine. Thus began the period of the Second Aliyah, which added to the foundations of the first an entirely new social and ideological dimension. The newcomers shared with the old-timers the quality of messianic determinism: they were convinced of the historic necessity of Jewish national regeneration. But while the First Aliyah had been content to leave the contours of the national revival to the future, the new pioneers came with a set of preconceived social and religious ideas. These ideas gave expression to another feature of messianism: utopianism.

Messianism in its "supernatural" form held that the future would be shaped by the hand of Providence; thus it ought to have had no room for utopian fantasy. This was in fact the position of Moses Maimonides and other medieval Jewish philosophers. The popular imagination, however, projected into the messianic age a glorious image, the inverse in every respect of Jewish existence in exile. Zionism too, in the course of time, evolved a multitude of utopian blueprints. The Second Aliyah was especially given to them.

The most influential of these scenarios was a variant of Marxian socialism transferred from the pioneers' Russian background. It is associated with the names of Ber Borochov and, in its elitist version, Aharon David Gordon. Disassociating himself from other socialist ideologies, Gordon made the national revival of the Jews dependent on a return to manual and especially agricultural work—an ideal he himself consistently lived up to despite far-reaching personal sacrifices. The theories of both Borochov and Gordon seem rather removed from any special Jewish connotations. Borochov's dependence on Marx is explicit, Gordon's indebtedness to the example of Tolstoy has often been remarked upon. Yet both theories centered upon the contention that the goal could only be achieved in the Jewish homeland—a condition lacking all logical consistency and hence in the final analysis messianic. Similarly, the Zionist theorist Ahad Ha'am postulated that the revival of an original Jewish ethic, which he claimed to be the essence of Judaism (religion was only its outer expression) would take place with the return to Palestine—an idea which once again makes sense only on the basis of an irrational conviction that renewed contact with the ancient homeland would have a revolutionary impact on Judaism.

Although they differed in what they demanded of Jews, these three utopian blueprints were at one in neglecting or even directly excluding traditional

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Jewish religion from their vision of the future. They thus conformed to the prevailing tendency to shape the life of the new society apart from or in opposition to Jewish tradition. Still, the tradition also had its representative, in the towering figure of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, whose vision was built on messianic foundations proper.

An outstanding talmudist and student of Kabbalah, Kook demonstrated his adherence to the national movement by joining the emigrants to Palestine at the outset of the Second Aliyah in 1904. Impressed by the renaissance of Jewish life in the country, Kook took it to be an indication of divine grace, opening the process of redemption. In his enthusiasm and with his exceptional gift for literary expression he produced in his writings a profound interpretation of his time, pregnant with kabbalistic connotations and metaphysical overtones. Kook's writings left far behind the thought of his timid rabbinical precursors, who had defined the spiritual significance of the resettlement in the Holy Land purely in terms of Jewish religious law. He returned to the explicitly messianic conception of Kalisher and Alkalay, the first apostles of national revival, but surpassed them in depth and intellectual daring.

Kook differed from all his predecessors on one crucial point. All the rabbinic authorities who supported the Palestinian enterprise had made their consent to it dependent upon the settlers' being observant Jews. Kook, no less conservative in principle, nevertheless lent an overriding significance to the rebuilding of the country, even if accomplished by nonobservant agents. This did not impair his ultimate vision—a reconstructed traditional life based on Jewish religious law but highly spiritualized, as would befit the generation chosen to see the dawn of the messianic age. But for the present, Kook's messianic scenario condoned and even justified the lives and work of the secular pioneers. It thus secured a measure of unity between the camps of traditionalists and innovators—an indispensable precondition for the creation many years later of the state of Israel.

MESSIANIC determinism played a part in several different phases of Zionist history. The conviction, permeating all ranks of society, that the underlying forces of Jewish history would inevitably culminate in a Jewish commonwealth imparted energy and a willingness for sacrifice to many people who might otherwise have been apathetic. But if this quality of dedication provided, and continues to provide, the Israeli enterprise with boundless energy, it has also tested the ability of Israel to adapt to changing circumstances. Any action taken under the rubric of messianic determinism is necessarily limited in its rationality. It is based on the assumption that the individual is responsible only for the preliminary steps; their completion is assigned to the messianic power or, in secular terms, to hidden historical forces. Activities undertaken in line with such conceptions may at times achieve what seems impossible; at other times they meet insurmountable difficulties and are defeated or frustrated. The history of Zionism is replete with both kinds of experiences; a contemporary example is that of Gush Emunim, the Orthodox "bloc of the faithful" who are vociferous champions of Jewish sovereignty in the occupied territories of Judea and Samaria.

The messianic drive behind the activities of Gush Emunim is blatantly apparent. Its quasi-political goal, the annexation of the full extent of the Holy Land as defined by religious tradition, is predicated on the belief that this is the precondition for the divine redemption—similar to what Zevi Hirsh Kalisher had believed for the more modest goal of establishing Jewish settlements in the country. Indeed, with the emergence of Gush Emunim this line of thought has come full circle, returning once again to a definition of the national objectives not just in religious but literally in fundamentalist terms. At any rate, the activities of Gush Emunim are characterized by feverish intensity and by inflexibility; only time will tell what their ultimate fate will be.

Less acute than messianic determinism but no less problematic is the other legacy of Zionist history, utopianism. The ingathering of the Jews, an achievement due to the belief in messianic ideals, has exacted a price: the results are often measured against utopian standards of judgment, and are inevitably found wanting. Aside from the gap that exists between every ideal and its fulfillment, there is the additional problem that the various Zionist utopias (social, cultural, religious) are mutually exclusive. Each could be realized only at the expense of the others; the outcome is disappointment for all parties concerned.

Zionist reality as embodied in the state of Israel is measured by a host of yardsticks, not only by outsiders but even more so by those who have created that reality and participate in it daily. This is perhaps the lot of all pluralistic societies. Yet Israelis critical of their society today tend to draw more far-reaching conclusions than used to be the case. It is not uncommon to jump from criticism to, if not the negation of the state, then at least to a renunciation of one's allegiance to it, thus justifying emigration from the country. It sometimes seems as if the very existence of the state has yet to be taken for granted, that even its *right* to exist depends on the fulfillment of an unwritten contract with one of many utopian visions.

THE dangers inherent in the intimate connection between Zionism and messianism are thus palpable. To meet them, some have argued that Zionism can and should be vindicated without resort to such irrational backing. Arguments of this kind have been marshaled to

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counter the growing claims made by movements like Gush Emunim, but the arguments themselves are not new. As early as 1929 the great scholar of Kabbalah, Gershom Scholem, protested on behalf of "thousands of Zionists" against the blurring of boundaries between the political aims of Zionism and the religious expectations of Jewish messianism. Since then, Scholem has repeatedly confirmed his profound opposition to such enterprises—an opposition that comes with special point from one who has dedicated his life to the study of the irrational dimensions of Judaism and has even been motivated in his scholarship by his personal attachment to the project of national revival. Aware of the misguided potentialities of irrational messianism as demonstrated by the 17th-century false messiah Sabbatai Zevi, and by the movement bearing his name, Scholem has warned of similar dangers to modern-day Zionism.

The parallelism between Sabbatianism and Zionism was and is a recurring theme in the historical evaluation of Zionism, especially among its opponents. For the late Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, the most consistent antagonist of Zionism in the last generation, Zionism and Sabbatianism were veritable synonyms. Since the ingathering into the Holy Land and the regaining of Jewish political independence had taken place without divine intervention or confirmation, as prescribed by traditional messianic sources, Zionism for Rabbi Teitelbaum represented an even greater usurping force than had the movement of Sabbatai Zevi.

The danger of messianic encroachments on politics will in the end have to be met politically. It is the test of statesmanship to channel popular sentiment toward politically defensible objectives. Indeed, the continued welfare of the state may depend on success or failure in this regard. But the neutralization of messianism can certainly not be achieved by denying its role in the history of Zionism. Attempts to banish the messianic ingredient may seem ideologically necessary to some, but the spontaneous sentiments of the Jewish people suggest the futility of the effort. The news of the Balfour Declaration in 1917; the conquering of Palestine by the English in World War I, and the inauguration of the first High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel; the 1947 United Nations decision on the establishment of a Jewish state; the declaration of independence; the victory of the Six-Day War in 1967 were all experienced as momentous and predictive occurrences for which, in Jewish cultural tradition, the messianic vocabulary is the only appropriate one. To blot out the points of reference contained in the messianic myth, even if it were possible, would impoverish the national consciousness.

Rabbinic legalists, secular ideologues, and scholars have for their various reasons tried to separate Zionism from messianism, but popular sentiment will have none of it. And this is as it should be. In every generation Jews have prayed for redemption, and never failed to include in their prayers the hope for a return to the homeland under independent Jewish rule. When this petition seemed to have been answered in our day, it was only natural to identify the momentous event as a partial fulfillment of the messianic hope. Thus the term, "the commencement of our redemption," included in the prayer for the state of Israel, is highly appropriate. Holding out still the hope for a total messianic consummation yet to arrive, it is at once an article of faith and an accurate reflection of historical reality.

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The Painters' Club

William Barrett

THE artists themselves spoke of it simply as "the Club." "Painters' Club" was my own expression when I had to identify it for some of my literary friends as the place where I might have picked up this or that odd bit of information. But the addition of the extra word came to convey to me the sense of an alien terrain, a place of very different attitudes and habits from the New York literary circle, centered on *Partisan Review*, in which I moved in the years just after World War II. So much so, indeed, that it was for a while something of an adventure to go there.

In fact, it was not a club in any usual sense: there were no formal requirements or rites of membership. A group of artists had simply pooled their resources to rent a floor-through loft in an old red-brick building on Eighth Street, which in a few years would be torn down for one of the tasteless apartment buildings that were to spring up throughout the neighborhood right after the war. Thus the Club, both in its setting and character, belonged to the ambience of an older Greenwich Village that would fade and virtually disappear in the following decades. Nor were the members all painters; there were artists in other media, and some with a mysterious and unspoken relation to art that I was never to know and who remained mere nodding acquaintances for as long as I frequented the place. But the nucleus of the Club that was to become famous consisted of the painters later known as Abstract Expressionists.

At this time they had yet to make their big splash before the world and they were not rich, but rents then were very cheap and they had managed enough money for a place of their own to hold meetings and parties. When the party mood was on, an old hand-crank phonograph would turn up with some borrowed records to dance by. Clement Greenberg, the art critic, who was the earliest champion of these painters, nevertheless disdained to socialize at the Club; but I do have one solitary memory of him there once far into the night doing the jitterbug, which was the dance that had come out of the war. It was part of his program for becoming the well-rounded highbrow, the intellectual who can move easily into more popular ways of life.

Sometimes the entertainment was more elevated in tone. A friend of a friend knew somebody at Juilliard, and shortly the Juilliard String Quartet were down to play at the Club. Nor was their playing perfunctory; in that informal atmosphere, they flung themselves at the music with extraordinary energy, and the meaning of "chamber" music seemed to take on some of its old dimension in that loft. There was a thunder of applause at the end, and the painter Willem de Kooning leaped to his feet and presented the musicians with his latest opus, a lovely black-and-white wash drawing, amid a burst of more applause—this time for the picture itself. The incident in itself almost dates the occasion: just a few years later, more likely than not de Kooning's dealer would be there to snatch the picture out of his hand. The price of success is the tyranny of the dealer: the artist cannot bestow his works so freely.

Mostly, however, the cultural efforts of the Club took the form of lectures and discussions. The folding chairs would be lined up, the members took their place as serious and intent listeners, and their discussions afterward were heated and lively, though not always directly to the point. It was in this connection that I made my own entree to the Club, to deliver a lecture on the subject of Existentialism. The invitation came through Elaine de Kooning, who was, socially at least, the liveliest spirit of the group, perpetually concocting possible programs and entertainments. I don't think I've ever spoken to a more attentive audience, yet I wasn't sure they heard what I said. That is, they listened to my words, but I'm not sure they heard their meaning. Ideas, abstract ideas, have a way of bouncing off the minds of artists at curious angles and ricochets that are a marvel to behold and a puzzle to try to follow. I was invited to give a second

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lecture, but somehow the date got mixed up, and in the confusion I was able to get off. In excuse I remember remarking to one of them that perhaps they had had enough of ideas and should stick to their art, and that anyway it wasn't necessarily a good thing for artists to mess too much with ideas. My tone was kidding, but it turned out that I was in fact prophetic. The subsequent history of the New York School was to be, at least in part, an indecent traffic with ideas, in the course of which it is really remarkable that some good painting managed to get done.

There was something quaint and touching in all this bohemian camaraderie. It was at the farthest remove from the literary cocktail party, where each guest measures the other as a possible target in which to stick darts. A cynic like Philip Rahv, who with William Phillips owned and edited *Partisan Review*, would have found the activities at the Club corny and naive, and he would have immediately set about hunting for hidden motives. I doubt that he would have found many, at least at this stage of the Club's history. The artists were simply bound together by an enthusiasm for art, and particularly the art that they, or some of them, were going to create and bring before the world. In this kind of innocence they harked back to an older bohemian way of life in Greenwich Village earlier in the century, or perhaps before that to the *vie de bohème* of the previous century. One of the members, I've forgotten who, sat around one evening with a doleful face; and after questioning, he revealed that he had not been able to pay his rent and his landlady was threatening. Thereupon a hat was passed around and a collection made that was sufficient to bring back a smile to the poor man's face. This little episode might have been a scene out of Puccini's *La Bohème*. But would this innocent camaraderie be able to survive the advent of success for some of these artists? The jostling for galleries, the intrusion of the art dealers, and the competition for the favors of rival art critics?

For the group that was centered around the Club was shortly to pass from being unknown to being nationally and internationally famous; they were to be celebrated as the first American artists to have created a truly international style, and with their arrival, it was claimed, the center of art had now definitely passed from Paris to New York. Yet here too, as in life elsewhere, the fruits of success did not mean unalloyed bliss, and their new-found affluence was to bring some of the artists personal problems they had not experienced before. The breakthrough of the Abstract Expressionists was to bring with it a fundamental change in the situation of the American artist within his society. The international acclaim for an American style was to enhance the status of the native artist, as a result of which the artist's relation to his public, to the dealers, and to the museums, was to undergo fundamental change. The change that was beginning to happen in those years, which of course we could not see at the time, was a radical alteration in the role and position of the avant-garde within modern culture: from its traditional role of the rebel and outsider, the avant-garde now stormed into the establishment itself, and gradually came to occupy seats of power within the museums and the universities. For the most part, these changes were beneficial to the artists; certainly they benefited, or some of them did, financially; but whether all these changes would prove to be for the ultimate benefit of art itself, still remains to be seen.

And none of these rather awesome developments was to be suspected in the humble beginnings of the Club.

Its founder, organizer, and general factotum was a sculptor, Philip Pavia, whose own works were kept hidden, though I understand they really do exist. No matter; Pavia had his identity as the tireless and disinterested worker in the service of the Club and its members. His two right-hand men in the venture, the two stalwarts who were really the artistic and moral center of the club, were the painters de Kooning and Franz Kline. Bill and Franz were the champions who gave confidence to other members that their own gropings in art might also be significant. Neither had yet attained public eminence; de Kooning was not to have his first one-man show until 1948, and that was at the small Egan Gallery, a transient showplace that seemed almost conjured up for this single purpose; but in the eyes of the other members they had already arrived artistically and it was only a matter of time before the rest of the world caught on.

Toward Jackson Pollock the attitudes of the group had to be more complex. He was looked up to, of course; he had "broken the ice" artistically, as de Kooning himself had said of him, by opening the way to a new style; and he was also in the process of breaking the ice publicly by being the first to come before the attention of the art world. And in both these senses they had to acknowledge him as a leader. But he was a leader who had to be approached at something of a distance; for Pollock would get drunk, and when he got drunk, he would get violent, and so had to be handled cautiously. On one occasion Franz Kline had to stand at the entrance of the Club to keep Pollock from entering. Kline was tough, sturdy, and very strong, and one of the few who could and did stand up to Pollock when the latter was in his cups.

At this time Pollock had already moved from the city to the Springs, Long Island, and he used to come into town only once a week for a session with his psychoanalyst. It was an interesting but rather peculiar arrangement, which may or may not be to the credit of psychoanalysis. Pollock's big personal problem was his drinking. So long as he stayed out all week on the Island, he would be sober and

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working—and this was usually credited to the efficacy of his analysis. Then he would come into the city for his weekly analytic session, after which, as if some great burden had been lifted, or as if he were rewarding himself for a duty fulfilled, he would proceed that night to get roaring drunk on the town and tear things apart. Thus I never had any really satisfying conversations with him. When I met him on a few occasions in more formal company, he was sober and chastened, and usually sat through most of the evening in utter silence. On other occasions, he would be in the process of launching himself on his weekly bender; and though he would be affectionate and rambling in his talk, one always felt he was on the edge of erupting into violence. You did not know whether the next moment he might embrace or assault you.

With de Kooning and Kline it was an altogether different story. I saw a good deal of them and got to know them well; I would run into them around the neighborhood or go to their lofts, and I was able to talk with them at length and at ease. For me these conversations were a fresh adventure after the intensely verbal argument or articulate chitchat of my fellow intellectuals. With the painters one moved into another area of sensibility; our talk had a different human and sensuous "feel" about it.

No doubt, my intellectual friends at *Partisan Review*, where I, along with the poet Delmore Schwartz, was working as an editor in those years, would have found many of the ideas of the painters crude or naive; but then the suspicion was beginning to dawn on me that the way that the intellectuals looked at things might not be the only or in all cases the best way of looking. And, in fact, these conversations with the painters were one of the things, among others, that were feeding this suspicion.

II

MEANWHILE back at the ranch, at *Partisan Review* itself, some indications had arrived that something might possibly be going on in the art world, and the news provoked some very personal repercussions.

Clement Greenberg was our art critic. He was also the art critic for the *Nation*, but his more theoretical and assertive pronouncements appeared in *Partisan Review*, and at this time he had begun to push very strongly for Jackson Pollock and the tendency in art that Pollock represented. And when Greenberg advocated something, he jumped in with both feet. The generosity of spirit in a critic who seeks to assist a movement that is struggling to say something new is certainly to be applauded; and Greenberg's enthusiasm in the cause of the new painting was to his credit. Besides, the audience for art in this country had to be prepared for the large and bold abstractions of the new style. And some of this audience would even have to be persuaded that abstract art as such was a perfectly legitimate style. But Greenberg went on from this minimal argument from legitimacy to contending that abstract art was the only significant style for this time and place. What American painters like Pollock were doing, he claimed, was not merely another interesting experiment; it was the right and historically inevitable—right because historically inevitable—direction in which painting must now move. Painting had evolved to the point where it had at last discovered that it was really about visual form and nothing else. The term "Abstract Expressionism" had not yet been coined; Greenberg used the term "American Style Painting" or the "New American Style," and he had now become the dedicated prophet in its service. But like many another prophet, he tended in his pronouncements more and more toward dogma, and his tone became more solemn. And here some questioning murmurs began to arise in the *Partisan Review* office.

There was no love lost—to put it mildly—between Philip Rahv and Clement Greenberg. Rahv would never forget, or forgive, Greenberg's presence at, and part in, a bitter "confrontation" between Rahv and William Phillips over personal relations at the magazine. At times he even thought of Greenberg as the real *agent provocateur* who had instigated that unhappy meeting, which I and Delmore Schwartz had also attended. Worse still, Clem and William had since become very close friends, and the thought of this made Rahv toss even more painfully on his bed of uneasiness. Rahv himself knew nothing about the visual arts and did not care very much for them. It is really remarkable that he, the autodidact who had educated himself so tenaciously and scrupulously in the New York Public Library, had rarely, if ever, taken a trip uptown to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Nevertheless, he began to murmur against Greenberg's articles that they were too dogmatic and one-sided. At which William Phillips challenged him, "What do you know about it?" And Rahv, who could himself be so very dogmatic on any matter that came within his ken, had to retreat into the vague statement that he had heard such adverse comments in "certain quarters." He did not name names, but he did locate the sources as in "midtown," thereby implying they came from the art establishment. His wife, Nathalie, was an architect and designer, and undoubtedly had such contacts. After all, there was some ground for saying that in his enthusiasm Greenberg had gone overboard on the new painters.

But Rahv would not have been Rahv if he had not worked out a whole theory not only of Greenberg's motives in his art criticism but also the reasons why he had become an art critic in the first place. Greenberg, according to Rahv, was pushing the present trend among painters because he expected to ride in on the wave of their success. As

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for his becoming an art critic in the first place, the reason for that was quite simple: the fact was there were too many literary critics around, and Clem thought it would be easier to avoid the competition by going into the field of art.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ, for his part, had his own misgivings about Greenberg, though he did not voice these at any editorial meeting, for he was too aware of the close friendship that had grown between Clem and William, and he did not want to say anything that would embarrass William in his continuing tension with Rahv. But Delmore kept bugging me on the subject. For some reason, he had a certain animosity toward Greenberg, not the consuming hostility he was to develop toward Lionel Trilling, but a kind of impish desire to see Clem taken down a peg or two. He had written a story in which Clement Greenberg appears as Claude Vermont; and having created a comic persona for Greenberg, he seemed intent on translating this into life. Delmore was nettled by what he thought was a certain pomposity about Greenberg. I defended Greenberg. I didn't think Clem was pompous; he was slow of speech and, in the company of articulate talkers, would have to insist slowly and deliberately on what he had to say—and the effect could come across to some people as pompous.

But whatever his reasons, Delmore found himself amused by making small sideswipes from time to time, and he wanted me to get into the action. At this time Greenberg was reaching out for any corroborating authority for his ambitious theorizing about art, and he was particularly fond of citing Kant's aesthetics in support of his own formalistic views of art. After all, Kant had insisted that the essential and basic condition of beauty lies in the relations of form: the beautiful object is one which, in its own relations, conforms to the formal conditions of our own sensibility. There was a special sense of triumph when Greenberg trotted out the reference to Kant; for one thing, the reference was a little arcane, and there was a special cachet in citing a philosopher who did not fall anywhere within the Marxist canon. But sometimes the reference did sound rather sententious coming from Greenberg's lips, and Delmore would growl, "Clem is always putting on the dog—intellectually speaking." And then he turned to rebuke me for my silence: "Listen, you know Clem doesn't know what he's talking about when he mentions Kant. Why don't you show him up?" And then Delmore, his anger gone, would chuckle at the prospect; he had no particular malice here, it would just add to the fun to see Clem embarrassed. Delmore was always fascinated by the aesthetic possibility of some small social comedy happening around him. If for the moment he was blocked from writing the social comedy he wanted to, he might at least help create some of that comedy in his immediate environment.

I never followed Delmore's prompting. For one thing, my memories of Kant's aesthetics, brushed over rapidly somewhere in my graduate studies, were now very vague, and for all I knew Greenberg might be right in invoking his authority. Besides, I had been learning from him as he explored this new painting, and I was disposed to follow him patiently to the end to see where his ideas would lead him. But there was another and deeper reason why I would not then have done anything deliberately to add to his embarrassment: he had befriended me in a number of small but significant ways, and I felt a genuine friendliness in his attitude toward me to which I had responded naturally by liking him. From time to time, and without being heavy-handed and obtrusive about it, he had taken on the role of an older friend offering counsel; and there was one particular occasion, puzzling at first, that was to assume more and more significance for me as time went on.

On that occasion he had taken the opportunity to warn me that I might perhaps be overadapting to my environment. Those were not his words, as I remember, but I am trying now to give the sense of what he said. I had entered the *Partisan Review* world with enthusiasm, and, naive about its ways, had nevertheless proceeded to identify—perhaps overidentify—myself with the spirit of the magazine and its editors; and that overidentification could be crippling to me. There was nothing malicious in any of Greenberg's words here; he spoke, in fact, with admiration of Rahv and Phillips as editors: they were "two of the most intelligent men in the country." Yet in all that intelligence there was something lacking. . . . What was it that was lacking? Here he could not quite nail it down for me. Above all, there was something "negative" in their thinking: it canceled the possibility of any infectious enthusiasm unless it be calculated and measured beforehand. Greenberg might here have been covertly defending his own tremendous enthusiasm for the new painting. Even so, I would say now in retrospect that if one had to choose between going overboard on a new movement and not being capable of any spontaneous or previously unsanctioned enthusiasm altogether, the former might be preferable. At least, as an art critic, Greenberg was capable of a generosity of spirit in welcoming what was new.

Yet it was the word "negative" that caught and fixed my attention, and more so as time went on. It was not a question of Rahv and Phillips as individual personalities. It was something that had to do with modern intellectuals generally. What was it that was "negative"—or nihilistic, if you prefer the more philosophical word—about modern intellectuals as a class?

Clem was speaking to me as an older brother, but in no way that was either pompous or objectionable; and even though I did not fully understand what he was driving at at the time, I felt a wave of

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gratitude toward him for it. I happened also to admire him for his deliberate concern with his own personal integrity, his efforts to establish a kind of moral code for himself, however corny and quaint this seemed to some people in the circle.

Yet despite this affection and admiration, I too began to be troubled by some of his critical attitudes—especially when I went back to the Club and talked with the painters.

III

FOR ONE thing, they were not nearly so dogmatic. The artist does what he can, and is grateful to any favor of luck or inspiration that can make a particular style at the moment compelling and convincing to him. Greenberg was insisting that abstraction was the only really valid way for painting now to go, that it was the historically inevitable style for our time, and that any attempts at representative painting were historically outmoded and bound to be mere pastiche. The artists were grateful to him for his support but not quite sure of the ideology that came with it. Franz Kline shrugged at the big abstractions about historical necessity. Painting was painting, and the painter confronting his canvas faces the same age-old problems. *"You work from nature, away from nature, back to nature."* He was now on a certain swing of the circle and doing abstractions; but who was to say that the circle might not come around again and he would be doing representative painting?

Kline was not a verbal or glib character. His talk was usually the smallest of small talk; so that when the occasional bursts of generalization came, they could carry a kind of simple and earthy eloquence. He was also a very physical man, short, stocky, and powerful; and his stubby fingers, when they sketched an occasional gesture in conversation, seemed to be testing the sensuous feel of what he was saying. He couldn't escape being a painter even when he talked. In comparison, de Kooning was the more intellectual, though this last word has to be taken with some qualification. He had the more complex, restless, and darting mind, and he dabbled a little in ideas. But the intellectual excursion was always held in rein by the painterly intuition, which the ideas after all were to feed. He could take in an idea only as a visual image.

Both men, de Kooning and Kline, struck me as absolutely steeped in tradition. Their talk moved back and forth between the present and the past as if there were no break between, and whatever they themselves might be fumbling toward in their art must find its place alongside the work of the past. Nor did they squint at the old masters merely to extract their "formal" values. That way of looking at pictures became the fashion after the Abstract Expressionists had broken through. I remember a class in painting in the 1950's where the instructor —himself a painter of talent and taste, but now an evangelist in the cause of abstract art—had hung upside down a large black-and-white print of El Greco's "Burial of Count Orgaz." By looking at it that way, disregarding the human and representative content, we were to learn what the painting was really about: namely, the distribution of masses and the patterns of light and shade. I looked dutifully, and think I extracted the lesson intended; but as the print continued to hang there upside down week after week, I began insensibly to have the uneasy feeling of all those noble gentry of El Greco's brush now hanging with their heels to heaven. Painting was really about painting: what would El Greco have thought of that? I began to think that perhaps we had turned him on his head.

But de Kooning came at the work of the old masters with the wonderful directness and energy of a child. There was one show in particular that he had found overwhelming. At the outbreak of the war the paintings in the various Austrian galleries had been collected together and placed in secret hiding so that they might be spared the destruction of bombing. When the war was over, some enlightened official had the bright idea that, since they were all gathered together, they might be sent on tour before they went back to their separate locations; and so it was that the collection came to the Metropolitan Museum, an absolutely gorgeous display mainly of the great 17th-century masters that the House of Hapsburg had collected in the days of its power and affluence. De Kooning lost himself in this show with the delight and absorption of a child at a toy fair. He had a beautiful naiveté of response which, together with the Dutch accent that he never lost, gave a kind of charming spontaneity to his talk. The Dutch masters were plentifully represented in this collection, and with them de Kooning always felt he was coming home; but this time another picture, a Velázquez of a man on horseback, had taken such hold of him that he had immediately decided, "Gee, I'd like to do something like that." And here de Kooning mimicked the pose of the rider nonchalantly and arrogantly holding the reins. And in fact he spent several days thereafter doing nothing but sketches of men on horseback. Some of them weren't bad either, he said now; but in the end he had given it up, he simply didn't know enough about horses and horsemen. Notice, however, that it was the arrogant beauty of a man on horseback and not a pattern of light and shadow that had gripped his imagination.

There was another small, but hardly insignificant, aspect of this occasion that has a bearing on the change that was soon to take place in the painters' situation. We had been talking in my apartment (de Kooning lived then little more than a block away in a cold-water flat on Carmine Street), and I offered him a drink. He asked for it neat, and I poured him a shot, from which he took occasional

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and tiny sips and hardly had finished it at the end of the evening. He was not then a drinker; but only a few years later, when success and affluence had come, he was to have problems with drinking. He could even take a kind of rueful pride in the story of how, leaving the Cedar Tavern one night in his cups and rather unsteady on his feet, he had been followed and "jack-rolled" in a doorway ("mugging" had not yet become the common word at this time) and had been relieved of four hundred dollars. That was a very sizable sum of money at the time, and that he carried it around with him in his pocket was taken as a sign that he had really made it. He could take further satisfaction in the fact that to lose four hundred dollars had not been catastrophic and he could even tell the story as a joke on himself. A few years earlier a loss of that sum would have left him bankrupt.

Just when the change set in I cannot say, but signs of it were beginning to be visible early in the 1950's. Word had got around that the Cedar Tavern, just off Eighth Street on University Place, was the place where the painters hung out, and now the visitors began coming in. Some were the merely curious, who wanted to gawk at anything that might be going on, but some were eager aspirants, hoping to jump on the bandwagon of a successful movement while it was getting under way. It was not exactly the Klondike gold rush on a small scale, but the bar was now noticeably noisier; and some of the regulars began staying away on busy nights, dropping in instead in the afternoon. But the change was not all noise and unpleasantness; occasionally there was some small incident that carried with it the sweet bloom of success. Once the painter Marca-Relli came in with an Italian visitor in tow. The Italian was from Venice, and had insisted on being taken to the bar for the express purpose of meeting de Kooning. After the introduction was made I pointed out the historical significance of the occasion to de Kooning: Venice had once been the center where the pilgrims from Northern Europe had come to learn about painting; now the scene had shifted, and a Venetian had come to New York to meet him. De Kooning blinked for a moment, trying to take in the full sweep of the idea, and then his face lit up with a grin: "Gee!"

AT THIS point the writer Harold Rosenberg, who had turned art critic, entered the scene as another champion of the cause. Clement Greenberg had led the way, but Rosenberg now made the more dramatic and splashy impact. They were antithetical personalities, and naturally took up the new art from very different angles. Greenberg was trying to construct a neat formal aesthetic to accommodate what American painters were now doing within the canon of modernist art. Rosenberg was the glittering phrasemaker, who flung himself at the existential struggle of the painter, both with himself and within society, to bring something to life on the canvas; and so he coined his own term for the new style, "Action Painting," the implications of which were not purely formalistic. The two critics even chose different painters for their exemplary figures: for Greenberg it was Pollock, and for Rosenberg it was de Kooning; and this rival choice set off a certain tension among their followers.

Subsequently, Rosenberg and de Kooning became close; and when de Kooning was affluent enough to move out to the Springs, Long Island, they were neighbors. Rosenberg, who had been educated as a lawyer, was helpful to the painter in a number of practical and personal ways; but I had my misgivings whether he was a help intellectually. It may not be the best thing in the world for the concrete mind of the painter to drink too deeply of the waters of ideology, especially when dispensed by so subtle a hand as Rosenberg, who had the bewildering habit, even while he dazzled you, of leaving any subject more complicated and puzzling than when he took it up. But I kept these misgivings to myself. I remember one occasion when I found de Kooning in rather vehement but friendly argument with someone—I forget whom—at the Cedar Tavern. I didn't get the thread of the argument, but at the moment I stepped in, de Kooning was sputtering passionately, "Atheism! Atheism!" He stammered, momentarily at a loss for words, and then the simple and spontaneous image came: "It's like an empty lot between warehouses where they've just torn down the buildings." At that time a lot of tearing down had been going on around the edge of the Village, and walking east from Fifth Avenue one encountered those desolate gaps; de Kooning had walked that beat often enough, and at the worst hours of the night, and he could find no more vivid image for the emptiness and desolation of non-belief. I remember thinking at the time, "I wonder how long Harold is going to let him have that thought." De Kooning thought more profoundly when left to the visual material of his own images. If ever a man might have profited by being born into a different culture, it was he.

IV

IN THE meantime a new threat to Greenberg's position on *Partisan Review* seemed to be in the offing. The magazine had suddenly acquired an angel, Allan Dowling, who had seemingly appeared, as angels do in the Bible, out of nowhere. The financial aspects of the patronage could not have been very large; everything was so much more modest in those days. But in any case these were matters that Rahv and Phillips, as owners of the magazine, kept to themselves, and I did not ask. The magazine would not now be swimming in affluence, but there would be nevertheless a greater sense of ease in meeting the more urgent bills. The editors felt elated at this new

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prospect, but also just a little worried about the possible pressures this new benefactor might bring to bear upon editorial policies. As it turned out, they did not need to fear. Dowling was a gentleman; he did not want to bring pressures for any drastic change; we were to continue to do what we had been doing, but perhaps a little better now with a small financial boost. There was only one troubling note for William Phillips in this new arrangement: Dowling had let slip that he was not very enthusiastic about the art criticism in the magazine, and this meant that William would have to be even more nervous about protecting Greenberg's position.

Rahv, on the other hand, was thinking along another tack. With his perpetual quest for hidden motives, he was puzzled at the arrival of this angel. What did this man expect to gain by putting his money into a "little" magazine? The immediate, Freudian, answer to which Rahv's mind leaped was that this angel might be looking for girls, and might have thought that a literary circle was where they could be found. But this supposition was quickly disproved, for Dowling seemed to be well provided, or as well as he wanted to be, in that direction. The real motive, as it turned out, was not so far-fetched as any of these speculations, and at length even Rahv himself seemed to accept it: Dowling wanted simply the gratification of sharing in an intellectual enterprise and perhaps thereby of having some sense of belonging to an intellectual community, however small. And it was in this latter connection that he was to make his only positive suggestion about a change in the magazine's structure: he would like there to be a board of advisory editors which would meet every month or so to discuss matters of general policy.

Rahv chuckled at the naiveté of this very minimal request. What harm could an advisory board do? It would be the easiest bone to throw to the patron if that was what was needed to keep him quiet. Everybody knows that advisory editors do not want to be bothered, that in fact they never do anything and, consequently, can't make much trouble. Besides, we would put on this board of advisers old friends like Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, and James Burnham, who would be on our side in case any dissension arose. For a while William Phillips joined his fellow editor in the fun, and they were even able to slip back momentarily into their old camaraderie. But suddenly there was a menacing note in this new set-up. Dowling was a friend of the art expert James Johnson Sweeney and insisted on putting him among the advisers. Sweeney was then an official in the Guggenheim Museum, very active in the cause of modern art, and a vigorous partisan of abstract art, but his views were different from Greenberg's and it was known that he did not admire the latter's art criticism. Here was a new source of possible trouble that William Phillips would have to be on the lookout for if he were to protect his friend Greenberg.

THE monthly dinners with the advisers turned out, in fact, to be pleasant occasions. Ideas were thrown out and discussed, but nothing of a kind seriously to alter the actual course of the magazine. On only one occasion did Sweeney indicate, and then in an indirect but nevertheless cutting way, his dissatisfaction with what Greenberg had been writing on art. But the incident requires a slight preparation.

Allan Dowling had come up with the idea that *Partisan Review* might give an annual prize for literary achievement. What he had in mind was something like what the *Dial*, the great literary magazine of the 1920's, had done in its period. The *Dial* prizes had established a certain standard for avant-garde excellence, and in turn had brought fame to the magazine. Who could forget that the *Dial* prize in 1923 had been awarded to T.S. Eliot for "The Waste Land"? And with this wistful remembrance something was revealed of his motives that should have satisfied even so confirmed a cynic as Rahv. Part of the aspiration that led him to become a patron was that he wanted *Partisan Review* to fill the role that the *Dial* had once played and which, it seemed, had been one of the stirring memories of his youth. Why is it that in this period immediately after World War II the dream of a flowering of the arts took the form, at least for some people, of a reincarnation of the 1920's? And it would be a minor but not altogether unenlightening bit of research to find out when these dreams began to give way. I think by 1950 it was clear that we were coming to face another world from that of the 1920's. It was not simply that the political configuration of this world had begun to jell into its present grim mold. The earlier decade had been able to cash in on the presence of traditions that no longer seemed available to our period. It was all very well to daydream about a prize for another "Waste Land," but where was one now to find a poem like it? The question of genius and talent aside, the circumstances that had converged to make Eliot's poem so electrifying a statement of contemporaneity for its period no longer seemed to be potently at work in our world.

The conversation turned from this difficult question of a possible recipient to consideration of the form the award might take. And the mood began to be a little more playful: if there was no one around to give the prize to, one could still dally with the idea of what the prize might be. A great outlay of cash was out of the question, for our patron was not that generous; and besides it would seem inappropriate: the special cachet that this prize would carry was that, though small in comparison with other more public grants, it represented the verdict of select and avant-garde taste. One or two casual suggestions were made, and it was then that Sweeney launched his sally.

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Now it so happened that in the current issue of the magazine Clement Greenberg had used a slightly more dogmatic tone than usual, and had solemnly pronounced on the historical death of "easel painting." The painters in the "New American Style," he declared, needed large areas to work out their motifs, and this effort, even when done on canvas, carried with it the scope of something like a mural. The easel painting, which always suggested a window open on space, with all the accompanying illusions of perspective, was now a thing of the past, historically obsolete by the evolution of painting. He did not use the Marxist phrase, the "dustbin of history"—but the thinking was along that line.

What then, we were discussing, should be the prize if it were ever to be awarded? Sweeney was a hearty Irishman with a booming laugh; and now the laugh erupted: "Give the winner an easel painting." The sarcasm was possibly lost on those present who had not yet absorbed Greenberg's current pronouncement. But William Phillips was not one of these, and across the table I could see him wince.

But any serious trouble from Sweeney never did materialize. He wrote one piece for the magazine; but writing was slow and laborious to him and more was not forthcoming, so that he did not become the alternate and Greenberg remained in sole possession as art critic—at least for as long as he needed to work out and disseminate the views which have now become more or less canonical with the art establishment, or an influential portion of it.

FOR, make no mistake about it, these views have wielded and still wield a potent influence. The reader may think that we have been engaged here in the intramural bickering within a small circle about ideas that might seem quite special and remote; but in fact, if he is a museum-goer, he will have been exposed to these ideas and perhaps already shaped by them. An exhibition of Cézanne, say, is held in one of our museums. Here and there alongside the paintings will be a printed card instructing the viewer what to look for. (And the crowds, more likely than not, will usually spend more time milling around these instructions than looking at the paintings.) And what is the controlling interpretation behind those little printed instructions? That the significance of Cézanne is his being a forerunner of Cubism. The viewer then looks for the underlying Cubist skeleton and strips off all the flesh of the painting. Or is it a show of Monet that we go to? (I am, of course, thinking of an actual museum and actual shows.) He will be told that the culmination of Monet's art is "The Water Lilies." Why? Because it looks most like a painting of the Abstract Expressionists. The emphasis—or should I say dislocation—of taste is always in the direction of the formal element of the painting.

It was only natural that Greenberg's ideas should infiltrate the university. Academicians, and especially young academicians, are usually attracted to formalist theories of any kind, for these theories seem to promise some kind of rigor and exactness. They seem to give one something definite and precise to talk about, in comparison with which the realities of the spirit look vague and insubstantial. In time these younger historians of art graduate, become professors in turn, and teach other students; or they find positions in the museums, whence they are able to write illustrated monographs that become the books the public reads for their authoritative instruction.

My own disenchantment with Greenberg's ideas came slowly. I had followed his lead in learning to appreciate the new painters, and on a few occasions he had taken me to see their works. I went with him to see my first Pollocks at a little gallery that Peggy Guggenheim had for a while on Fifty-seventh Street. It was night, the lights had not yet been fixed for the show and the paintings, unhung, stood around the walls. What with the garish light and Miss Guggenheim's nervous fluttering, these were not the best conditions for taking in a new painter. I came away with my first impression of Pollock as a great sprawl of yellow paint. Later on I saw his work under better conditions and began to appreciate it; but even then something of this first impression lasted: Pollock was not a painter in pursuit of strict form.

And then I began to suspect that Greenberg's position was not even internally consistent with itself when he took Pollock as his exemplary master of the moment. Cubism was central to his historical thesis. The Cubists had developed a strict and controlled form, which took the plane of the picture as absolute, and dissolved and resolved all objects into their formal relations within that plane. The internal logic of painting had brought it to this state, and painters could do nothing but follow in this vein—or produce some inauthentic and quaint pastiche of the past. But if so, de Kooning should have been his exemplary figure among the Americans rather than Pollock. The early de Koonings of this period (the 1940's) worked within the Cubist tradition, to which they brought something absolutely original: they made the Cubist forms move and dance, gave something of the free flow of calligraphy, and nevertheless remained essentially within the Cubist idiom. But the impulse in Pollock's painting came from elsewhere; it did not operate within the convention of strict and controlled form; if anything, it was disruptive of form. Pollock is very much in the American grain, like the writers Walt Whitman or William Faulkner, who throw themselves on the vitality of their inspiration, trusting that its sheer flow will be sufficient to generate enough form to sustain the work. In Pollock this inspiration is not always sufficient to generate enough form, and the

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painting sags; when the vitality of his primary impulse carries him along, the effect is stunning. There are good and bad Pollocks, and I do not think critics have been sufficiently discerning between the two. When an artist enters the world as the leader of a movement, criticism is likely to become tendentious and insist we either swallow or reject the work as a whole.

And once these initial doubts had crept in, the formalist aesthetic began to look woefully inadequate as an account of the whole sweep of the modernist movement. Granted that modern art had made extraordinary technical discoveries, and that it had created works of an abstract and formal nature that have a singular power of their own that we do not find anywhere in the past. Still, can this formal aspect do justice to the full range of expression and search in a Picasso, Matisse, or a Miró? Greenberg himself did a monograph on Miró, a copy of which he kindly presented to me with the modest disclaimer that it made no pretense of being exhaustive. It was not. Miró is almost the last artist one could hope to encapsulate under a formalist aesthetic. With him the inventions of form are always in the service of expression; and the sensibility he expresses is at once poetic and surrealistic. Even within the body of Cubist painting itself, the purely formalistic aesthetic resulted in some very one-sided judgments of taste. Greenberg extolled the early works of Cubism, the so-called "Analytic Cubism," to the detriment of the later works in which Picasso and Braque put the Cubist devices to work for their own expressive purposes. No doubt those early works of Analytic Cubism contain some massive and powerful achievements in pure form; but do they really cast into shadows a later work like Picasso's "Three Musicians," so haunting in its suggestiveness, at once somber and mocking?

It was not at all that Greenberg lacked sensitivity here. On the contrary. Philip Rahv's cynical suspicion that Greenberg had taken up art only because there were too many literary critics around and he wanted to avoid the competition implied that he had only a nominal and casual relation to the subject. I knew different; I knew that Clem had a primary and direct response to visual works of art that most intellectuals, and some art critics, do not enjoy. The two other art experts in our immediate circle were Harold Rosenberg and Meyer Schapiro, and I doubt that they had the capacity for visual immediacy that Greenberg did. I went once to the Museum of Modern Art with Meyer Schapiro, an erudite and brilliant scholar in the history of art, and the experience was exhilarating; but there came a moment when I could not help thinking: if only the man would stop talking for a bit, if only that spellbinding flow of words would cease, and some painting or other would stop him in his tracks and make him go silent. I had the feeling that the work of art was noticed only as the springboard to his discourse, a mere stimulus to set the verbal machinery going. But Clement Greenberg could be stopped in his tracks by the sheer visual impact of a painting, and let it work on him in silence. He had a real and discerning response to the sheer sensuous texture of painting; and he did have taste. He looked long and carefully at pictures; and it is worth noting that in a legal suit about the authenticity of some of Pollock's paintings years after his death, Greenberg's testimony, very much of it from memory, turned out to be precise and authoritative.

But with all these qualities, the puzzle really began. What point is there in having taste or the capacity of immediate sensitivity to the sheer visual impact of a work if in the end the ideological machinery is going to take over and fabricate a position that rides roughshod over these qualities? An ideology is a cruel taskmaster and may require of us the sacrifice of our best perceptions. But the thirst for an ideology is also one of our modern addictions.

Greenberg came on this addiction from an earlier immersion in Marxism. There he had acquired the passion for thinking in terms of "historical inevitability," and now with art he must situate aesthetic values somewhere along the line of an imaginary curve of history. The Marxist terminology had very largely disappeared from his presentation, but the way of thinking, the cast of mind, was the same as he had shown on an earlier occasion at the outbreak of World War II. Greenberg himself had then been an editor of *Partisan Review*, and he teamed with Dwight Macdonald against Rahv and Phillips on the issue of the war. The latter supported the war against Hitler; Greenberg and Macdonald were isolationists, on strict Trotskyist and Marxist principles. The war, after all, was a capitalist conflict between Germany on one side, and France and Britain on the other. Let it rage on, whatever human destruction it brought in its wake; for only out of such chaos and ruin would a truly revolutionary situation arise that would bring in the socialist future. Had not Lenin, the master, thus welcomed the outbreak of World War I as a prelude to revolution? Greenberg was a Jew and a humanitarian, and he detested the horrors of Hitler as much as anyone. But what did those personal feelings count for when the conceptual apparatus took over and one had to make one's judgments of value in accordance with the long perspective of historical inevitability?

But if the original impulse had come from Marxism, he was quite willing to be eclectic in grasping at any philosophic props for his theory. Kant's aesthetics, as I have mentioned, was an authority he constantly cited in conversation; but now he would reach out to another quarter of the intellectual compass and seek philosophic support in modern Positivism. No matter that Kant and the Positivists might be uneasy bedfellows; each might be used

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separately to lend support. Ours was an age of science, Positivism was the scientific philosophy of our time, and one had, above all, to be in tune with the deeper *Zeitgeist* of history.

Now, from a strictly positivistic point of view, what is a painting but a flat surface overspread with certain visual data? No matter who the artist and whatever his nominal subject matter, this is what the eye really sees when you get down to the scientific brass tacks. (He seemed at this point to forget that Kant had insisted that our basic transactions with the work of art takes place in imagination.) The measure of the painter's achievement, then, should be merely how well he arranges the pattern of sense data on the picture plane.

Ironically for Greenberg, though he did not know it, at the moment he was seeking support from the Positivists, they themselves were in the process of relinquishing their own doctrine of sense data. We do not see patches of color, but objects in space: chairs, tables, other people. It is not just a green shape, mottled with shadow, that I see now through my window but the old maple tree on my lawn. Indeed, of all our sense organs, the eye is the one most riveted to definite objects in the external world, and it has to be for our survival; if we saw only patches of color, we could hardly go about our daily activities. And it is by the simplest and most natural extension of this power that we see through the plane of the picture the space on which it opens and the objects therein represented.

Nor was Kant any better prop for Greenberg's thesis. Sometime later, much later, I read Kant's aesthetics and found Delmore Schwartz's suspicions were right, that Greenberg had misused that venerable philosopher. Delmore had been trained in philosophy, and had even gone into graduate study for a while as a step toward a career, but he soon lost patience with the tedium of academic philosophy. Yet he retained from his immersion in it an amazing intuition about ideas, a sensitive nose, particularly for when a critic was lapsing into "idea-mongering" or "philosophy-mongering," as he called it—the inauthentic rattling around of big terminology. And he was perpetually spotting this malady in the literary critics of his time, even his beloved idol T.S. Eliot. Even though he knew very little of the subject, he had sniffed out the same thing now in what Greenberg was doing with art.

It was not that Greenberg "got Kant all wrong," as Delmore put it, but that he seemed to have read only the first thirty or forty pages of Kant's work. In those pages Kant does develop a formal theory of beauty—Greenberg was right at least there; but this is only a prelude to the fuller theory. For Kant the beautiful in art is subordinate to the beautiful in nature, and indeed it would be morally pernicious to separate the two. The formalist who looks at a picture merely as a flat plane with a certain pleasing arrangement of shapes and colors would be morally suspect in the eyes of Kant: an aesthete who has cut off the work from any reference to the wider world of man and nature in which it finds itself, and is content to go on chewing the cud of his own private sensations. The experience of nature, on the other hand, leads us beyond our private self, and indeed beyond what our ordinary conceptual mind seems able to grasp. The long line of the mountain folds into the curve of the river, and there just above it, clearing the horizon, the first evening star appears; and as I stand rapt before this vision, I am invaded—and without thinking—by the feeling that we and this universe are part of some meaning that we cannot grasp. Here the formal theory of beauty takes a theological direction. If the perception of beauty consists in an accord between the formal properties of the object and the formal conditions of our own perception, might not this be an intimation that we ourselves, as perceivers, are in some ultimate attunement with this cosmos we find beautiful, that we have a place and a meaning within it? It is not a formal argument for God—Kant is too critical for that; he is simply describing the content of an experience, and I think the experience is there for anyone who surrenders to it, however confident an atheist he might be in his other attitudes.

Kant was thus the most unlikely of philosophers for Greenberg to have invoked in support of his own aesthetic. Rational and enlightened as Kant's century might pride itself on being, it still existed within nature and in relation to God in a way that we can no longer manage, and that the art Greenberg extols would altogether forget. Indeed Kant, were he to return to our midst, would find it a sign of the spiritual poverty of our age that one of our leading critics should offer a view of art so narrow and barren, and that this view should have become quasi-official in some influential quarters.

V

The story I have been telling was to be a success story, of Clement Greenberg, as it turned out, as well as of the artists; but it was to bring about a transformation of the art scene in New York with consequences that were not always benign.

The transformation really set in with the 1950's, when the art dealers began to get into the act. There was a new affluence after the war, and potentially a new group of buyers for art. This new class of patrons for the most part had little previous experience of art, and therefore no barrier of traditional taste to overcome. The works they bought may have looked strange and inexplicable to them at first, but they were easily reassured by the dealers that these works were "important," and that if they were not at the moment the "in" thing, they were the coming thing; and that their monetary value

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would appreciate considerably. Had not the new American School become internationally famous almost overnight, with prices now escalating out of sight? And who was to say the miracle might not be repeated for any new style, however odd and unfamiliar it might look at first?

Thus the purchase of new art was a good investment altogether; it secured status for the buyer in several ways: in showing his collection he was also exhibiting himself as a man of culture who kept up with the "in" things; it had cultural chic; but it also represented potentially a mass of constantly growing capital. It was important to buy in early, the earlier the better: a painting acquired for a moderate price now might be worth a small fortune in a relatively short time. The dealers naturally pushed this emphasis upon novelty, the new thing, for its possible speculative purposes. One of them remarked to me in a moment of frankness: "I never ask myself whether a work is good or not, but only if it has historical importance." The word "historical" is worth noting here; in practical terms, he meant simply whether it might start a trend, or a new direction, which in turn would give the work more monetary value in time. Again, the push toward novelty.

This attitude of dealers and buyers began to spread, sometimes for different motives, to the artists themselves. Perhaps Greenberg's ideas led this way. After all, if you are a painter and begin to be preoccupied with historical inevitability, and what style must be pursued at this time, you are tempted to feel that perhaps you may give that line of inevitability a push in your own direction. At any rate, the younger artists now coming up began to think of their own efforts in terms of very large abstract notions about something called "Painting," and the stage of development at which it had arrived. A friend and I (this was in the mid-1950's) visited the studio of an aspiring painter, a young woman who had only been at her art a few years but seemed a coming talent. She had just completed a large painting that was not without its merits, and we congratulated her on it. At which she only shook her head ruefully, stared somberly at her own canvas and remarked, "Yes, but does it do anything for *Painting*?" Afterward, my friend and I agreed that her response seemed sadly presumptuous: instead of looking at the individual work in its own terms, she had become her own art historian and was speculating on her possible place in the line of history. She was not alone here; quite run-of-the-mill talents began to be preoccupied with "advancing the medium." In terms of the marketplace, of course, these lofty concerns could be given a quite commercial twist: the artist preoccupied with where he stood in the evolution of painting became in fact intent on producing some new gimmick that might prove to be the "in" thing. When the constraint of subject matter has gone, the artist has only his medium to exploit, and any new twist of originality may possibly be salable as a coming trend.

We reach a stage where the great experimentation of modern art, and indeed the greatness of this art itself, begins to be trivialized. Even the success story of the Abstract Expressionists turns against them: in a short while Abstract Expressionism was to become old hat.

There followed thus a procession of new styles and names on the New York art scene. Op Art, Pop Art, Minimal Art, Conceptual Art, Color-field painting, and the rest. Clement Greenberg may have speculated much about historical inevitability, but as a prophet of actual history he fell far short of the mark. One style did not emerge as the inevitable and necessary way of painting in this time; instead, the *Zeitgeist* was to find its expression in a riotous proliferation of new schools, often tendentious and in conflict with each other. To be sure, some of these styles were in the general direction of abstract art: if you push the process of abstraction far enough, you end with the emptiness of Minimal Art; and with so little now left on the canvas, you have but to take a small step further and declare, with Conceptual Art, that the idea alone will do for a work of art. But the emergence of Pop Art was a raucous return to the actual visible world, often in its most crass and glaring aspects; and representative art generally has reacquired status, and is seriously pursued by many of the younger artists. The eye, it seems, is not to be denied its thirst for the external world. But even here we notice a touch of the modern gimmick in the case of so-called Photo-realism: the painter does not give himself to the objects in the world around him, but to their photographed image by the camera. In a technical age, man imitates the machine.

As the pursuit of novelty went on, the restraining barriers of taste became less and less visible. The disturbed decade of the 1960's, with its squalid atmosphere of permissiveness, decended upon us, and the spirit of "anything goes" was in the air. The notion of good taste itself now appeared suspect: it sounded "elitist," than which in the jargon of the time no attitude could be more damnable. To those who had lived with it in the past, the Museum of Modern Art now seemed to take on a new appearance; the rooms on the ground floor consigned to the newest things became crowded with dull, tasteless, and crude objects that seemed very often to have little claim to the name of art. "The junk rooms," my wife and I came to call them, and we were glad to escape upstairs to the permanent collection and the company of the modern masters. Here in the short space of a stair flight the whole question of contemporary art seemed to be posed for one: had the period of modern art really passed, and in the post-modern period in which we now seemed adrift, what were we to build upon? The

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museum, of course, was now discharging its function as a documentary historian of the times, of what was now going on, and it was following the excessively democratic spirit of the period. To have exercised the discretion of good taste in what one chose to show would have been "elitist." Besides, how could you really be sure? Had not the great works of the modern movement seemed shocking and impossible to their contemporaries? At this time the city colleges in New York had adopted a policy of open admissions—anyone with a high-school diploma was accepted as a student. At City College, which had once been a select and elite institution, professors of English were reduced to teaching remedial reading. I felt that the museum had followed suit and adopted its own policy of open admissions.

It was Harold Rosenberg rather than Clement Greenberg who turned out to have the sharper eye for the actual drift of history. Always a neat hand at phrases, Rosenberg was to baptize this restless quest for novelty as the "Tradition of the New." The expression is catchy, but if we stop to think of it for a moment, it becomes paradoxical and puzzling, and raises more questions than it can clarify. To my ears it sounds a little like the Trotskyite phrase, the "Permanent Revolution," about which I had mixed feelings even when I was a Marxist believer. If the revolution is permanent and unceasing, then next week you reverse what you have revolutionized this week. A tradition is supposed to be a revered standard to which you hold fast; but if your tradition is novelty as such, then out of the impulse of sheer change you may abolish that tradition too. Thus, literally and logically taken, the phrase is without meaning; but in the actual situation in which Rosenberg invoked it, the art scene of today, it is altogether pregnant with meaning. It points toward the heart of our dilemma today: toward the ceaseless proliferation of new styles and forms that is now going on, amid which there can be found brilliance and originality but also a bewildering sense of loss, and even the sense that the great tradition of modern art itself, with its depth and resonance, may be lost.

PERHAPS, then, we may have reached a point where the whole question of modernism in art may be raised with some deeper understanding. Our century provides us enough of this art so that, looking backward, we may draw some conclusions.

The spirit of experimentation and novelty, of course, is not new; they were the watchwords with which the avant-garde broke in upon the scene in the early years of this century. "Make it new!" Ezra Pound proclaimed in those years when he and T.S. Eliot were leading a revolution in literary taste and in the writing of poetry. But Pound was seeking freshness and originality rather than novelty for novelty's sake, and in his revolt against the petrified tradition of the Georgian poets he harked back to the deeper tradition of Dante and the Provençal poets, as Eliot made the Elizabethans and the 17th century live again in his own verse. Eliot was to turn his critical powers on this question in the famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," which was published in 1919 but gathers force now in the light of everything that has happened since. Like Pound, but not so vociferously, he applauds the search for the new: if we have to choose between a stale repetition of the past and novelty, we should certainly choose the latter. But we cannot leave the matter at this glaring confrontation of two dismal alternatives. If we are serious, we are not interested in novelty for novelty's sake, for the mere shock of it. The genuinely new work of art must be one in which past and present enter into more intimate union. And that, of course, is Eliot's conclusion: that the really new and original work of art is the most traditional, in the sense that it draws most deeply on the resources of its tradition even while bringing these to a surprising and unexpected expression.

Never did a critic call his shots more accurately. The whole history of our century confirms his conclusion: the great works of the modern masters, in all of the arts, are those which draw most deeply on the resources of the tradition, and which in turn enter the body of tradition and give it a deeper and richer life. The oddities of experiment in style or point of view that claimed our attention at first begin to recede in importance as these works enter the company of older masters.

We may think here, if we will, of a biological metaphor drawn from the example of mutations as they occur in nature. Most mutations are harmful and non-adaptive and quickly disappear. Those that catch hold and survive are those that fit in with the inherent structure of the species, that draw upon the resources of the gene pool even as they may give these potentialities a new direction. Meanwhile the life of the species continues through the transformation; or if the change is more radical, the life of the genus continues in a new species. The past comes to life again in another form in the present. The chemical components of our blood, we are told, are those of sea water, from which our own life originally came.

But nature has its own safeguards against random innovation, its own natural means, so to speak, of passing tradition on from one generation to the next, while in our human society at the present time the institutions that would convey tradition are in a rather shaky condition. Under such circumstances the entry of the avant-garde into the establishment, and indeed its growing dominance within the establishment, were events of signal importance.

The process began in the 1950's, and thereafter accelerated quickly.The artists got teaching appointments; and from infiltrating the academy,

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they began to be the dominant voice within it. From the academy their influence passed to the museums and the staffs of museums. The critics had long since been captured, and the number of dissenting voices became fewer. All this was generally to the good; it was well that the artists should have jobs and come to occupy the seats of power; and if their voices were sometimes strident, they nevertheless had something vital to say that the academy needed. But since the modern movement is divided into contending schools and styles, inevitably a certain sectarianism and spirit of the clique crept in. We come then upon the paradox of an avant-garde, supposedly dedicated to the "Tradition of the New," dictatorially enforcing in its students the repetition of a narrow and confining style. Also, a certain inflation of reputations set in: mediocre artists could be railroaded through, and praised immoderately, because they were following in the wake of more powerful talents.

CLIQUE or club? We seem to come back to the image from which we started. But what a far cry now from the Club of the 1940's, whose poverty and camaraderie seemed to come out of the *vie de bohème* of the 19th century! That club which met and danced in its loft has now become invisibly transfigured into a club in a different sense—a privileged circle of power; and most of the older and lesser members have long since dropped by the way and been forgotten. But when the avant-garde becomes the establishment, one is led to question whether it does not thereby lose its own *raison d'être*. It came into existence, after all, in the previous century in revolt against a tradition that had become too narrow and ossified; but if the force of tradition has become so weak, and standards everywhere more permissive, the rebellion of an avant-garde seems perhaps unnecessary and in any case less heroic than once.

No doubt, the avant-garde still borrows the older rhetoric of rebellion, but we begin more and more to notice the irony when a critic, safely ensconced in one of our leading universities, affects to speak in the language of the outcast. And we are also led to ask whether what has happened in politics may not be happening here: when a revolution takes over, it becomes fat, bureaucratic, and intolerant.

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Ulster: In the Empty House of the Stare

Herb Greer

We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned.
Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.
—WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

THE present media tableau of Ulster has become as fixed and conventional as one of those temperance woodcuts of the last century. Its dramatis personae wring tears from audiences in many countries; but in the United States this flow is a veritable torrent. Americans lament the wretched Catholic minority who are supposed to long, unanimously, for union with "their" country in the South of Ireland; cheers resound from the land of the free for the brave "freedom fighters" (Provisional IRA and Irish National Liberation Army) who—we hear—have unanimous support among the Catholics; hisses are heard for the Protestants because they oppress the Catholics and are nasty, like the Reverend Ian Paisley, and deserve whatever they get from the "freedom fighters"; the loudest boos are saved for the "Brits" who are thwarting a poignant wish to "unify Ireland" while torturing prisoners, shooting innocent civilians, and doing other things too horrible to mention. Among the supernumerary walk-ons are Catholic and Protestant victims and the British soldiers who are murdered in this "fight for freedom"—just the people who "get killed in wars"; the stars are the terrorists, especially those who were starving themselves to death one by one last year. The proper denouement of this melodrama is meant to be an Ireland United and, in the words of the old song, "A Nation Once Again." The awkward fact that such a nation never existed is irrelevant; so is the unpopularity of the "freedom fighters" among Northern *and* Southern Catholics, plus the wish of not a few Catholics to remain citizens of the United Kingdom.

To discover whatever scraps of truth may lie behind this dramaturgy, we must range back into the past. But how far back can we reach for the beginning of the real quandary between these Britannic and Hibernian parts of the British Isles? The very Celts, to whom Irish nationalists look as the true Irish, were first of all "British" invaders, replacing a small dark people known as the Firbolg in the centuries before Christ. But that is perhaps a little too far back. Let us begin rather with the famous "800-year struggle of the Irish nation" which is today touted in the streets of New York and Chicago. This modern legend says that the "freedom fighters" are the heirs of an Irish nation which was invaded by Anglo-Saxon aggressors in the 12th century; it was then ruthlessly oppressed but never extinguished, carrying on through the generations a battle for freedom whose final stage we see now in Ulster's six British counties.* For our century, when national-liberation struggles are two-a-penny, mass-produced, and mostly very recent, this must be the hoary grand old man of them all.

To speak of the 12th-century Irish nation is something like speaking of the 20th-century Arab nation. The traditional "kingdoms" of Ireland resembled nothing that we know by that name. Individually and severally they were a crazy quilt of phratric territories and influences, without a political center of gravity and devoid of any popular sense of national unity or identity. The tribes did share a common Celtic language and a certain cultural style and pattern of customs. Their Christian religion, however, was a European import, brought in earlier by a British monk who is now called St. Patrick, and heavily diluted with local paganism. The society was savage and extremely primitive by contemporary European standards; the title of High King carried no administrative or even nominal authority over the whole island, where loyalties were purely personal and tribal.

The "Saxon invaders" of nationalist legend were neither Saxon nor invaders. They were the Norman French who, under William the Conqueror, had destroyed the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the 11th century. William's descendant, Henry II of England, when authorized by Pope Adrian IV to "enter Ireland," did not do so. At the invitation of an Irish

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*Before the 1921 partition of Ireland, the province of Ulster contained nine counties. Three of these, with large Catholic majorities, were joined to the Irish Free State. The other six remained in the United Kingdom.

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chieftain, Dermot MacMurrough of Leinster, a thousand Normans under Richard Fitzgilbert, Earl of Clare (called Strongbow), crossed the Irish Sea in 1170, to help MacMurrough in a local dispute. Strongbow married MacMurrough's daughter and succeeded to his rule in Leinster. Only then did Henry II travel to Ireland, to confirm the royal authority over his vassal Fitzgilbert. This led to the extension—by treaty—of the English king's suzerainty into Ireland. The Gaelic chieftains did not rise up against this but agreed to it willingly. The arrangement was endorsed by Pope Alexander III in 1172, and three years later Rory O'Connor, the High King, put his name to it.

English administration of Ireland, such as it was, centered on the old Viking city of Dublin, and did not run far. The Norman baronies accepted only a nominal overlordship of the English king, and beyond them the tribal territories were left to themselves. In time the Norman settlers took up the local language and customs, and were absorbed into the tribal system, to become themselves "Irish." We have had a souvenir of this process in the Norman French middle name of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

I do not propose to drag the reader through the whole complex history of the British "presence" in Ireland, stage by bloody stage. But it should be remembered that when rebellions occurred, particularly in the early days, they were more often mounted by English settlers and their descendants than by Gaels, and were fought on the assumption that military force was a legitimate means of establishing sovereignty—for the crown as well as for the rebels. These uprisings (which were by no means continuous) were not rooted in any nationalist cause. In principle the Irish had no objection to the titular authority of a foreign king. The "Crown of Ireland" was offered at various times to Norway, Scotland, France, and even Austria. Fighting in Ireland was liable to break out in disputes over land, over the rapacity of crown administrators, or—where English power was weak or indifferent—a tribal chieftain might try to reassert and broaden his influence. This was the case with the great rising of the Ulster "king," Hugh O'Neil, against Elizabeth I at the end of the 16th century. But he was defeated as the 17th century dawned, and the tribal system was broken forever. In all these conflicts the common people suffered horribly, cursing the rebels as often as they damned the English. There was no more national solidarity at the grass roots than at the top—where there was none at all.

After the Reformation, the Catholic powers of Europe attempted to use Ireland as a back door into Protestant Britain. This threat to the security of the crown sparked a more positive English involvement in Ireland and was an important reason for the "planting" of English settlers on Irish soil. The most successful of these ventures were the 1609 Plantation of Ulster and the 17th-century settlements in Ireland after the Cromwellian civil war.

Some writers have given the impression that these plantations involved a mass displacement of the local Irish by a solid phalanx of English and Scots invaders. What actually happened was rather a filtering in of newcomers among the native Irish, who were constantly present and used as labor on the land which had been confiscated for the settlers. This mingling did not lessen hostility between Catholic Irish and Protestant settlers, but inflamed it, especially in Ulster where many settlers were as plebeian as the locals. Feeling cut off from their mother country amid a dangerous alien population, these Northern Protestants developed that mixture of sectarian hatred and stubborn self-reliance which still survives today. But the sectarian conflicts of the 17th century were not a matter of Irish nationalism. In the civil wars of that period Irish Catholics fought alongside English Papists, not for an independent Ireland but for the Stuart kings of England. They lost, first to Cromwell and then to William of Orange (who was not English), and suffered the fate of the losing side: penal laws barred them from politics and the ownership of land.

It is one of the many ironies of Irish history that when a real nationalist movement did appear at the end of the 18th century, it came out of the Protestant community, partly as a protest against the English parliament's suppression of trade and business in Ireland. Wolfe Tone and his fellow rebels tried to make an Irish revolution on the French model, with the help of an anti-clerical French government and in the face of bitter condemnation from the Catholic clergy. The enterprise was a somewhat intellectual, middle-class effort with no popular base; it quickly degenerated into sectarian butchery and resulted in the formal Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800. A popular sense of Irish nationalism did begin to emerge after that, most prominently under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell; but this was part of a general birth of such feelings among European peoples, and did not express itself in any popular wish to separate Ireland from the British imperial crown. This was so inside Ireland even after the great mid-19th-century famine.

It was the huge Malthusian nightmare of the famine, more than anything else, which contributed to the image of a cynical Britain turning its back on the suffering Irish and so fostering Irish nationalism. In fact the system of loose rule through local oligarchies had always been common to the whole of the United Kingdom. The width of the Irish Sea made it looser in Ireland than in mainland Britain; this was the main cause of the long history of maladministration and official corruption on the island—though it should be said that the opportunities for corruption and chicanery were taken up as eagerly by the Irish as by British officials. It has been suggested that the Bri-

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tish government deliberately engineered the starvation of about a quarter of the Irish population in the middle of the 19th century and forced another quarter to emigrate. This is the general view of American descendants of the emigrants, providing most of the emotional fuel for American support of violent Republican groups. Like many an atrocity story in nationalist mythology, this charge of genocide has a *prima facie* plausibility; but it will not stand serious examination.

It is true that the British authorities were not deeply troubled by the agonies of the Irish poor. They were, however, equally indifferent to their own lower classes. The first great public-health campaign in the United Kingdom, after the 19th-century cholera epidemics, succeeded not through official compassion but because foul living conditions and disease threatened to wipe out an important section of the labor force. No such consideration applied in Ireland. Out of sight across the Irish Sea, the poor there were tenant farmers at the bottom of a many-layered system of land tenure, with an agricultural economy that was too inflexible to support the population—depending as it did on the single food crop of potatoes. When this failed the whole structure collapsed, and the British government was simply unable to grasp the nature and scope of the disaster. It seemed at first just another of the periodic sharp famines which the Irish had suffered before and survived. When some inkling of its extremity did seep through, there was no practical sense of how to help on the necessary scale, or even that such help was possible. It would have required a vast aid operation of late 20th-century proportions—something unimaginable at the time, without a ready and deep-seated belief that these large numbers of poor, useless as a labor force, were worth a gigantic effort and expense, just because they were human beings.

For us to whom compassion has become a basic political principle, that is taken for granted. It was not so in the mid-19th century. This may make it easier to understand why attempts to help the Irish (there were some) proved limited and not very effective; and why rent, in the form of edible produce, was being shipped out of Ireland at the very height of the famine. To portray the calamity as cold-blooded murder is exciting melodrama but bad history.

Of course the victims were not looking at history. They were trapped as participants in a grim spectacle of families reduced to mutual cannibalism; roads littered with the skeletal bodies of those who had died with their mouths full of grass; forced evictions which meant joining those corpses on the highway; desperate famished mobs outside the workhouse, waiting for death inside to give them a place and some faint hope of life; and luckier survivors, uprooted from their land, sailing under often appalling conditions to find better hopes in the New World. The collective memory of these ordeals and other horrors was carried by emigrants to America and carefully preserved in their folk traditions, along with an utterly implacable hatred of the British whom they blamed for it all. It is no wonder that their descendants see the British as cartoon monsters, pitiless "Saxon" tyrants to be hunted out of Ireland like wild beasts.

ULSTER has from the earliest times been a peculiar place. It seems to have offered the stiffest resistance to Celtic invasion, and its later trade and cultural relations were sometimes closer with the Western isles of Scotland than with the rest of Ireland. The topography of Ulster protected it from Norman domination, and it put up the last effective resistance to the English in the time of Elizabeth I. Her garrison line against Hugh O'Neill ran from Newry to Lough Erne, not very far from the present border.

The 17th-century settlements of English and Scots on the island made Ulster exceptional in other ways. Most of Ireland was grounded on a Gaelic-speaking peasantry ruled by Protestant landowners who spoke English. (This was also the language of the small middle class, Catholic and Protestant alike.) Only in the northeast did Protestantism have a secure popular base. The traditional hostility between Papists and Protestants was sealed with agrarian violence between night-riding societies like the Peep O'Day Boys (later to become the Orange Order) and the Catholic Defenders. A sort of white-trash mentality grew up among poorer Ulster Protestants: no matter how low they sank, they could still look down on the Taigs, or Catholic peasants.

Ulster was the only province of Ireland to benefit from the industrial revolution, with a flourishing linen manufacture and a powerful shipbuilding industry. These softened the impact of the 19th-century famine in the North and, with the increasing solidarity of the Protestant community, strengthened Ulster's popular links with the United Kingdom.

Sectarian hatred was not eased by 19th-century administrative reforms which restored Catholic access to politics and land. Most Protestants were further unsettled by the emergence of a Home Rule movement* and, after the famine, by extremist groups like Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood who were determined to create an independent Ireland by armed force. Drawing most of their support from America, these wilder activists took up the tactics of assassination and terrorism being used by other such conspiracies in Europe. Their Jacobin approach was furiously castigated by the Catholic Church.

The amazing obtuseness of the British government over Home Rule (an arrangement which was not, after all, unprecedented in Ireland) gave

*Home Rule meant an Irish parliament with certain local powers of legislation and administration, under the suzerainty of Britain's crown and parliament. Something like this had existed as early as the 16th century, but now Protestants feared a huge and enfranchised Catholic majority on the island.

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Republican extremists time to consolidate. It also allowed the Ulster Protestants enough time to set up a formidable resistance to Home Rule, with an armed militia and a well-orchestrated political campaign to keep Ireland in the United Kingdom. Even the relatively mild Home Rule Bill of 1912 (it was the third try in twenty-six years; the others had been killed by opposition in Britain and from Irish Protestants) was rejected by the Ulster Protestants as "disastrous to the well-being of Ulster . . . , subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire."

Sir Edward Carson, who led the movement against Home Rule, was not a bawling redneck figure like the Reverend Ian Paisley. He was a solidly respectable Dublin lawyer with wide public support not only among Irish Protestants but over the whole of Great Britain. He was backed by the opposition Conservative party under Bonar Law, by key figures in the Liberal government first under Asquith and then under Lloyd George, and by important areas of the civil service and units of the British army, which would have to enforce any Home Rule Bill against the Protestant militia. During the so-called Curragh Mutiny of 1914 it became clear that a significant part of the British army in Ireland was not prepared to do this, and the issue brought the United Kingdom to the very edge of civil war. This awful possibility was averted by war with Germany and a parliamentary stay on Home Rule until that conflict was over.

Naturally the Catholic population of Ireland, and some middle-class Protestants, were in favor of Home Rule. But this still did not imply a separation from the British crown. The activists who favored a Republic were an unpopular tiny minority, opposed by the Catholic Church and rather unsavory even by our own criteria of national-liberation movements. The proto-fascist mouthings of Patrick Pearse about blood and soil evoke a familiar sort of nausea when one reads them today.

Much has been made of the British government's stupidity in killing Pearse and some of the other rebels after the 1916 Republican insurrection in Dublin. These executions were not extraordinary in a year when the British army suffered 60,000 casualties in a few hours—among whom were Irish Catholics and Protestants of the Ulster Division—in a famous battle against German forces on the Somme. Roger Casement was known to have tried to form a kind of Waffen-SS with Irish prisoners of war, and the Germans were openly hailed as "glorious allies" by the 1916 rebels. The British parliament's fatuous move of passing a bill for Irish conscription during the war, plus the sympathy stirred by the executions—Yeats's "a terrible beauty is born," and so on—no doubt helped the politics of independence. But so did Allied propaganda about World War I as a crusade for the self-determination and liberty of small peoples, and the general mood which this aroused after the war, both in Ireland and in the rest of the United Kingdom.

2.

THE IRA campaign from 1919 to 1921 against British administration of Ireland was unique on two counts. It was the first large-scale, sustained, and successful terrorist operation of modern times. It was also the first such clash in which news media played a more important part than military strength. There could be no question of the ill-disciplined and somewhat ragtag IRA matching either the Royal Irish Constabulary or the British army in open warfare; so a deliberately cruel and gruesome series of assassinations, atrocities, and small-scale harassments was mounted, together with a social boycott of the police enforced by ferocious intimidation. The object was to break the discipline of the crown forces (most of whom were Irish, largely Catholic) and provoke reprisals which would anger the population.

It took about six months to break police morale in the South. The reaction was then vicious and wholesale, and came not only from the police and their notorious auxiliaries, the Black and Tans, but from the British army. What were probably the worst of these incidents, many of which made sensational headlines in Britain and Ireland, happened in 1920. Villagers in the countryside, fearing reprisals during the night, went out to sleep in haystacks and hedges. Late in the year, following an IRA massacre in Dublin of twelve British officers, two auxiliaries, and one innocent veterinary officer, the crowd at a Dublin Gaelic football match in Croke Park was surrounded by the Royal Irish Constabulary and some auxiliaries. The officers were supposed to search for IRA gunmen. Instead they fired into the crowd, killing twelve civilians. The same night two IRA prisoners were killed by the police at Dublin Castle, along with a civilian who had been picked up at a nationalist haunt in the city. In December crown forces, taking revenge for a terrorist outrage, burned out and destroyed the whole center of Cork.

In Ulster, Protestant mobs attacked Catholic ghettos with bloody results. Being more defensive in the North, the nationalist campaign was consequently less effective; but the general strategy of the IRA was brilliantly successful. The Irish public was infuriated, and the British across the water, reading lurid accounts of what their own people were doing, expressed pained indignation, directed in great part at the British government and forces. As now, when cold-blooded atrocity and hot-blooded retaliation were weighed in a moral and political balance, the greater weight of obloquy pulled down the reprisal. This repercussion was compounded by the celebrated hunger strike of Cork's Lord Mayor, Terence MacSwiney. Arrested at an IRA conference, he protested at military interference with an elected civil official (though MacSwiney was in fact the local commanding

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officer of the IRA), and tempered the protest with a fast of seventy-three days. There were other hunger strikers, some of whom also died, but MacSwiney's lingering death—seen as an impressive example of moral courage and the stubbornness of Irish national feeling—most profoundly affected British and Irish popular opinion.

The Catholic Church, typically, reacted to the troubles with political circumspection. Condemning a terrorist murder in 1919, the Archbishop of Cachel remarked that even if the British had been committing outrages in Ireland, two wrongs did not make a right. What the IRA were counting on, of course, was for two wrongs to make a Republic. This species of political judo is a matter of habit these days, but it was novel then.

The extremists did not get their Republic. Southern Ireland, with its massively nationalist Catholic population, was too much trouble for Britain to keep; Ulster in the North, with its fierce, well-armed and organized Protestants (who still commanded immense popular support in Britain), was too much trouble to let go. Because Ireland had for centuries been vital to the security of Britain and still was, the 1921 treaty which set up the Irish Free State kept certain ties with Britain; a common citizenship was retained, as was a parliamentary oath of loyalty to the crown, and Britain was given port facilities on Ireland's Atlantic coast. Six of Ulster's nine counties were excluded from Free State jurisdiction and given a peculiar Home Rule. Besides sending regular MP's to represent its electorate in London, the province had its own parliament at Stormont, subject to the authority of Westminster—an authority which in practice was seldom exercised.

There was provision for union of the six counties with the rest of Ireland if Stormont should agree, but this clause was disingenuous under the circumstances. Since the 17th century, Protestants had been privileged above all in Ulster, and the Catholics had not taken it passively. In rural terrorism and then in urban riots, plenty of blood had been shed over the years, on both sides of the religious abyss. With revenge and counter-revenge become a tradition, it is easy to imagine how Protestants saw their fate under a government overwhelmingly dominated by their old sectarian enemies. After the signing of the Free State Treaty they watched a violently dissenting minority in the South—the anti-treaty Republicans—being mercilessly cut to pieces.

The Irish civil war of 1922-23 was bloodier and uglier than the fight against the British, with savage atrocities on both sides. For example, the Free State government sanctioned the summary killing of Republican prisoners. If the Catholics could treat their own like that, what would they do to those who had been their oppressors for centuries? This fear certainly contained an element of bad conscience, and was all the worse for that.

There was some effort in the North toward calming the old enmities. James Craig, the first Prime Minister at Stormont, made a number of conciliatory declarations. Lord Carson himself had said: "From the outset let us see that the Catholic minority have nothing to fear from the Protestant majority.... While maintaining intact our religion, let us give the same rights to the religion of our neighbors." These sentiments remained, as one might say, inoperative. First of all, the Catholic nationalists in the North—about a third of the population—refused to recognize or take part in the new administrative system, or vote in its elections. Then came Eamon De Valera's Irish Constitution in the South, claiming sovereignty over the six counties, and containing the ominous Article 44:

> The state recognizes the special position of the Holy Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens....

This was no dead letter. The Catholic hierarchy was able to meddle with effect in the political life of the South, suppressing legislation which it found objectionable, imposing censorship on literature and the arts, while preventing divorce or the sale or distribution of any form of birth-control device. These and other symptoms of social and political influence helped the Northern Protestants to feel justified in their own ruthless oppression of the Catholic minority, and to accept more cheerfully its self-imposed exclusion from the political life of the province.

THE intractability of the situation was acknowledged by Republicans even before the Free State Treaty was ratified. In August 1921, De Valera himself had told his colleagues that some of them had neither the power nor the inclination to use force with Ulster. It would, he said, be making the same mistake that the British had made in Ireland. This was a rare injection of reality into Republican discourse, but it was matched by a political *mesquinerie* which grew more intense as time wore on, widening the rift between Ulster and the South. After Britain gave up its Irish port facilities in 1938, De Valera kept his government officially neutral in the war against the Axis powers. There were accusations that he allowed the Germans to use the Irish coast as a haven for submarine action against Allied shipping, but these were never proved. Certainly he did permit the German representative in Dublin to send weather reports to the Luftwaffe, and these helped in the bombing of Britain and Ulster. Like Joseph Kennedy, the American Ambassador to Britain, De Valera did what he could to keep the United States out of the war. When his efforts failed, he protested at the presence of American troops in Ulster as an "infringement of Irish sovereignty." No such protest was made after the heavy German air attacks on Belfast.

As late as 1944, the American State Department said bluntly: "Despite the declared desire of the Irish government that its neutrality should not operate in favor of either of the belligerents, it has

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in fact operated and continues to operate in favor of the Axis powers." Upon learning of the death of Hitler, De Valera called on the Nazi minister in Dublin to express sympathy, insisting loftily that this was a neutral act of protocol. As the New York *Times* put it: "Considering the character of the man for whom he was expressing grief [and considering that 50,000 Southern Irishmen had volunteered for service in the British forces]...there [was] obviously something wrong with the protocol, the neutrality, or Mr. De Valera." For Ulstermen, many of whom died in the war against Hitler, and more of whom suffered under German bombs at home, these antics did nothing to bring Ulster and the Republic closer together as a "free nation."

The IRA had stayed unofficially alive after the Irish civil war of 1922-23, involving itself in desultory terrorism both in Ireland and—once World War II had started—in Britain. It became a pro-Axis underground organization, dedicated mainly to the support of Germany, while its titular "Chief of Staff" traveled to the Third Reich for instruction in the art of making bombs. The IRA reached out to Hitler as Wolfe Tone had once reached out to Napoleon, but Hitler's spies in Ireland had a low opinion of their would-be comrades-in-arms. The most important of these German agents, Herman Goertz, said: "In spite of the fine qualities of individual IRA men, as a body I consider them worthless." Their clumsiness and indiscretion caused De Valera to intern 400 of their number, probably in the fear that their activity would provoke Allied intervention in Southern Ireland. But the IRA survived that, remaining true to the old Irish tradition of secret societies.

For several years after the war the one-party state of Northern Ireland enjoyed relative calm. This was guaranteed in part by the 1922 Special Powers Act, a bit of police-state legislation passed to cope with terrorist attacks and never taken off the books. It was enforced by the Royal Ulster Constabulary, a predominantly Protestant force with an armed auxiliary called the B Specials who must have been—from the Catholic point of view—something like a gang of peckerwood deputy sheriffs let loose among Southern American blacks. The postwar supremacy of the Protestants was entrenched by measures like the Elections and Franchise Act of 1947, which among other things made it possible for one elector to have six local government votes, and by a system of gerrymandering which insured Protestant majorities on the councils of cities where Catholics outnumbered Protestants.

From 1955 to 1962 there was an upsurge of IRA activity against the six counties, the so-called Border Campaign. It sent the North into a state of armed alert and angered the government of the Republic.* After a spate of minor incidents at customs posts and other installations, and the blowing up of a BBC transmitter, the campaign fizzled out. There was no popular support for violent "unification" in Ulster, where the British welfare state had given Catholics a far higher standard of living than their fellows in the underdeveloped South. IRA men were interned at the Curragh camp in the Republic, and their organization once more subsided into its underground mode, dedicated in the North to protecting Catholics during sectarian riots. The next fit of terrorism in the North was to unfold in quite a different way.

3.

SINCE de Tocqueville it has become a commonplace that political protest and insurrection are not ignited by the despair of the oppressed, but by the prospect of an end to that despair. The year 1968 was brimming with such prospects, most of which were to be cruelly perverted. Those which surfaced in Northern Ireland were no exception.

On both sides of the border there had been efforts to break out of old attitudes. Irish President Sean Lemass and Northern Prime Minister Terence O'Neill exchanged visits in 1965, groping toward a friendlier relationship rather than instant unification. Ulster's Nationalist party responded by accepting the role of official opposition at Stormont; but Protestant Unionists, whom O'Neill had not consulted, boiled over. An extremist faction began to dispute O'Neill's leadership and a Protestant equivalent of the IRA appeared, calling itself the Ulster Volunteer Force. Proscribed under the Special Powers Act, it carried on like the IRA, as a secret society. In 1966 a demagogue and hellfire preacher, the Reverend Ian Paisley, stood up to contest the leadership of the *verkrampfte* Protestants. Like the rest of Britain, Northern Ireland was affected by a general sagging of morale in the 60's. In Carson's time the tightest bond between the province and the rest of the United Kingdom had been a common imperial citizenship. Now the empire was gone, and Britain was under economic and political strain, with its social fabric showing signs of wear. This pervasive mood of uncertainty, and the uncharacteristic quarrels among the Protestant majority, formed the background to a late-60's ferment which the students of Ulster shared with those elsewhere.

It was a measure of how things were changing that the protesting students did not organize against the partition of Ireland as such. Inspired by the Paris fulminations of May 1968, they joined a civil-rights movement founded two years before on the American model, with the Catholic minority as cognate to American blacks. The outstanding bones of contention were symptoms of Catholic second-class citizenship: discrimination in jobs and housing, the political chicanery which denied proper representation to Catholics, and so on. The protest in effect endorsed partition with a demand

*Under De Valera the Irish Free State gradually dropped most of its connections with Britain, so transforming itself into the Republic, and never giving up its claim to the North.

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that Catholics should have the same political and social rights as other Britons. But it was partition which had nailed down Protestant denial—and Catholic rejection—of those rights in the first place, so the two issues could not be so neatly separated. From the beginning there was a Republican element in the movement.

O'Neill responded to the protest and tried to liberalize Northern Ireland with anti-discrimination reforms. In retrospect, the assumption that with a few administrative measures it was possible to sweep away a long tradition of injustice, social abuse, and malice seems absurd. But the expectation was encouraged by the media above all. Nevertheless the reforms were stalled by popular opposition before O'Neill himself was deposed as Unionist leader, and then they were outpaced by another sort of action. The civil-rights people had their own extremists, who in October 1968 manipulated the movement into an illegal march from Belfast to Londonderry. They did this with the expectation that it would provoke violent Protestant reaction and draw the attention of the media. It was the old IRA tactic of 1919, in a more passive and devious mode. The gambit paid off handsomely, with bloody rioting at Burntollet Bridge and then in Londonderry and Belfast, in which undisciplined police became involved on the side of Protestant goon squads and mobs. This eventually forced the intervention of the British army. It also gave birth to the Provisional IRA, when the "Official" IRA failed to protect Catholics during the fighting and then opted for an unusually constitutional approach to the problem of partition. Feeding on blind hatred, terrorist violence grew among Catholics and Protestants. When the Stormont regime proved finally unable to cope with these atavistic spasms, it was dissolved, bringing the province under the direct rule of Westminster.

SPECTACULAR coverage of the urban *jacquerie* first sketched and set the outlines of the tableau with which I began this essay. The main beneficiaries of the media dramaturgy (which closely parallels terrorist propaganda) are the Provisional IRA and the self-styled "Marxist" Irish National Liberation Army which appeared in the 70's.* Their goal has been consistent throughout the last decade and is the same today. It is to exasperate and discourage British public opinion, while fomenting pressure outside the United Kingdom (mainly in America) for Britain to "do something," i.e., turn the six counties over to the Republic. The political credit for this is then to be used to manage a gradual takeover of Ireland, after which its rather too British manner of government can be transmogrified into something more in accord with the fancy of the terrorists. As Mussolini said of himself and Italy in 1932: their stoutest backing in this noble enterprise comes not from Ireland but from the United States. It ranges from Tip O'Neill and some of his more moderate colleagues to the Irish National Caucus (led by that great Irish-American Mario Biaggi) and Noraid.

The activities which the worst of the American cheerleaders are happy to excuse include: wholesale destruction of property by arson and explosives; kidnapping; sectarian murder; ambushing and individual assassination of police officers, troops, political figures, and diplomats; and the random slaughter of civilians with bombs. Much of the media coverage in Britain and America has also given Irish terrorism a certain aura of legitimacy, most offensively through television interviews in which criminals are given approximately the same treatment as some leaders of the opposition; by comments like that of *Newsweek*'s Tony Clifton, who demanded on television that the British "get out of Ireland"; and in the gullible treatment of stage-managed incidents in Ulster, which depend upon what a bemused (London) *Sunday Times* journalist of Irish extraction called "the instant and expert mendacity to which journalists and no doubt other interested parties . . . are treated in episodes of this sort." An egregious case in point was Bloody Sunday in 1972, falsely projected as a gratuitous attack by British troops on unarmed and peaceful civilians. This lie is still believed in the United States and by a surprising number of people in Britain.†

Some sections of the media have enhanced the image of the terrorists by treating them as a "side" equivalent to the British government, carrying as it were an equal weight of sovereignty. *Newsweek* is one of the most careless in this respect, and has done other odd things. When the magazine published a moving photograph of a masked Catholic child waving his fists in front of a wall of flame, I wrote to its British headquarters, pointing out that the London *Observer* had photographed newsmen apparently in the act of staging that picture, using a pile of burning barrows in a vacant lot. *Newsweek* offered in reply their photographer's story that he had, in the company of all those newsmen (they included TV men carrying sound equipment at the ready), just happened to "come upon" the spectacle. This is rather like the insistence of ABC-TV that it interviewed a hunger striker's daughter in preference to other Ulster children because she just happened to be "articulate." At least one New York newspaper has published bald fiction about the British army in Ulster disguised as news. The Boston *Globe*, caught out publishing a lie in its report of the attack on Bernadette Devlin MacAliskey, was so embarrassed that it rethought its editorial approach to Ulster. A BBC TV magazine program, *Panorama*, broadcast in September what

*The Provos and the INLA are "armies" in the same sense that the Symbionese Liberation Army was a military force. Actually they are murderous secret societies in the classic Irish mold.

†The IRA maneuvered civilians in between themselves and troops, then opened fire. Seven civilians and six IRA men were killed by return fire. Surviving terrorists removed the weapons of the dead IRA men and withdrew, leaving apparently innocent "civilian" bodies.

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amounted to a party political show for the Provisional IRA—just at the point when the "anti-H-Block" hunger strike was collapsing and the terrorists badly needed such a public-relations coup. In this program, blame for stubbornness during the hunger strike was attached to the British government. Even the *Times* of London once went so far as to report two murders and an attempted murder in Ulster as a military "offensive." A certain amount of reportage for other countries has more to do with an itch to get in on some hot action—reporters create the action if necessary, with bribes—than with any concern for truth or victims or anything else in Ulster.

DESPITE this plethora of complaisant and occasionally corrupt journalism, the terrorists have signally failed to repeat the success of 1919-20. Initially sectarian killings were matched in kind by Protestant terrorists, as were bomb attacks. But such reprisals are no longer mounted on the same scale. The demoralized Royal Ulster Constabulary gave up its duties to the army while the B Specials were disbanded and the main force reorganized. It has now returned to its normal duty of policing the community. In defiance of extraordinary provocation, notably the Warren Point massacre (in which eighteen soldiers were murdered with radio-controlled bombs) and the killing of Lord Mountbatten with some of his family, army discipline has on the whole remained tight and professional throughout these troubles. Where soldiers have been caught in violation of standing orders or committing crimes, they have been arrested and tried.

Without the cachet of constant brutal reprisals, terrorist violence has proved counterproductive even in the Catholic community. The "hard men" are regarded as heroes by their friends and by some of the more obstinate Republicans. But the community at large, North and South, recognizes these people as remorseless butchers of human beings. Finally, as the whole world knows, they resorted to a desperate tactic in order to change this image. While the sniping, bombing, and murder continued, a formidable public-relations exercise was constructed around convicted terrorists in the Maze prison who engaged in a campaign of hunger strikes, aiming to recapture the moral appeal of Terence MacSwiney and cash in on the natural compassion inspired by the spectacle of men dying in public. The ploy drew enormous publicity abroad, sympathy in Britain and the Republic, and frenzied support among the American Irish. All this climaxed when one of the hunger strikers managed to win an Ulster by-election before committing suicide. As the cynical nature of the operation became clearer, the original sympathy was infused with a kind of embarrassed discomfiture, though Northern Ireland remains more than ever polarized along sectarian lines. Even though demonstrations concurrent with the deaths shrank in size, Bobby Sands's pre-terrorist election agent did succeed in winning the Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat vacated by Sands's death—after the principal Catholic party had been shunted out of the election.

The suicidal terrorists have reaped praise from many quarters, some predictable, others surprising, on the grounds that their "sincerity" is somehow worthy of "respect" and makes them "right" in some way. Before the hunger strikes it was the violence which proved the sincerity and the sincerity which justified the violence. Once the "brave boys" who were in prison for slaughtering other people and shooting soldiers in the back started killing themselves as well, it was their willingness to die—on the orders of their organization—which drew admiration, which in turn rubbed off on their "cause." There have been other such "sincere" martyrs in modern times. Horst Wessel was one, and a closer parallel could be found in the deaths of Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Their suicides too were followed by claims that they had been "murdered" by the authorities.

The Catholic hierarchy, after an ambiguous spell of objecting to violence in general—including the defensive violence of the British forces—while supporting the "nationalist" aims of the terrorists, at last found the hunger strikes too much to take. Following several deaths of hunger strikers and consequent civilian casualties, Cardinal O'Fiaich and his bishops denounced the campaign outright, being careful as always to assail the British government in their terms of reproof. In the lower echelons of the priesthood it is still possible to find a casuistic defense of the suicides on the ground that they were not really "intended"; the "intention" was political status, or British compliance with "five just demands" which amount to the same thing. In the longer term there is of course the "intention" to unify Ireland, change its government, and so on.

After the hunger strike collapsed early in October, the terrorists reverted to type with a bombing campaign in London; they murdered one old woman and an Irish Catholic teenager, while maiming a number of soldiers and the Commandant General of the Royal Marines. In mid-November they killed Reverend Robert Bradford, a British MP from Belfast.

Unification is in any event a false issue now, since the Irish government has no desire to haul Ulster, with its vast expenses and its large body of violent and terrified Protestants, into the Republic. No doubt the cry, "Ireland is One," will continue to be heard, if the present Finn Gael majority in the Irish Dail (parliament) collapses and a Fianna Fail administration is returned to office.* But the cry cannot, as we have seen, denote the restoration of

*Finn Gael and Fianna Fail are the two principal political parties in the Republic. Finn Gael is descended from the pro-treaty party which formed the Irish Free State. Fianna Fail is the offspring of the anti-treaty forces who lost the civil war, and claims to be more "Republican."

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some ancient Irish nation in its fullness. It really amounts to a demand for geographical symmetry, so that the shores of the Hibernian Island match the borders of the Republic. Then the "Brits" will be out of Ireland at last. Or will they?

IN THE last century Giuseppe Mazzini, the great Italian prophet of nationalism, was not impressed by Irish apostles of the creed. He observed that the Irish did not seek any "distinct principle of life or system of legislation derived from native peculiarities and contrasting radically with English wants and wishes." In 1905 the Irish nationalist writer D.P. Moran was more acid: "There are certainly some traits to be found in Ireland which stamp her as a distinct race even yet, but they characterize her torpor and decay rather than her development." He added that if Ireland could not become bilingual it might just as well accept the historical fact that it was "West British." It is an amusing irony that the 19th-century Celtic revival, spurred in Ireland by Douglas Hyde, was actually founded in England by the poet Matthew Arnold. Always a middle-class academic exercise, it never took root in Ireland, where the use of Gaelic has become largely a ritual. Gaelic as the common speech of the Irish was wiped out by the 19th-century famine, surviving only in remote areas of the West, now called the Gaeltacht. This is itself a species of linguistic museum where English is spoken as much as Erse.

Celtic culture thus has rather less to do with Ireland today than Norman French culture has to do with both the United Kingdom and Ireland. After centuries of intermingling, the British and Irish are ethnically identical.* For more than two hundred years the high culture of Ireland, from literature to architecture, has been predominantly British in its expression. As long ago as the 18th century Dublin was the second city of the British empire, and is today in many ways *more* British than some of the great conurbations of the United Kingdom. As the present troubles have shown, the political interests of Ireland and Britain are pretty well inextricable. Aside from mutual prejudice, regional accents, and the sectarian divide, there is little to separate Ireland and Britain except the width of the Irish Sea and the rituals of government. And as Mazzini predicted more than a hundred years ago, these rituals too are British. In the most profound sense Ireland has hardly separated from Britain at all. As a non-British entity the Republic is more of a notion than a nation. Unification would mean not the recovery of something old, but the expansion of that notion to make something new, or the illusion of something new.

No one, however, should make the mistake of underestimating the power of either prejudice or a political notion. On the first score nothing is more likely to provoke angry disagreement from a "Brit" or an Irishman than the suggestion that they are in any way alike. The British cliché-Irishman is a drunken, devious, blockheaded, and probably rather unhygienic bog-trotter who is priest-ridden, henpecked, lazy, breeds like a rabbit, and is prone to sing mawkish tenor songs about the ould sod, especially in his cups. He is also an irredeemable liar and hypocrite, imbued with a lethal Fenian hatred of the British. There is about as much truth in this as in the Irishman's bromide-Briton who is aseptic, coarse, brutal, arrogant, cunning but stupid and totally insensitive, unmusical, "Saxon," joyless, fundamentally irreligious and given to perversion, especially flagellation and homosexuality. He too is a liar and a hypocrite and regards the Irish as scum. It is not the best material for weaving the tie that binds, even if the real differences between the two are less extreme than, say, between an upstate New Yorker and a native of Biloxi, Mississippi.

The political notion is the most poignant factor because it contains a paradox. To recover their rights as Englishmen, Americans severed themselves from England, and were never so British as when they did that. The Irish case is not quite the same, because Irish nationalism has always contained a dash of French revolutionary Jacobinism, which is essentially destructive of freedom while paying lip service to the Rights of Man. This is the strain which survives in the terrorist groups of Ulster today. It has never been representative in Ireland and is not now. That is why the Irish people accepted at first a separation from Britain that was formally incomplete, and in some respects still is. (For example, there is still no immigration control between the two countries; Irish citizens resident in the UK may work without special permission and legally vote in British elections.) Northern Protestants shored up their privileged position with a powerful notion that they shared in one of the greatest empires in the world. The wonder is not that the Republican Irish were unable to break it, but that they succeeded in reducing it to the size of a mere six counties. This does indeed violate the arbitrary postulate that "Ireland is One," and so frustrates and angers nationalists. But there is nothing inherently wrong or unjust in that. As Americans should know, there is no necessary symmetry between geography and a political notion.

What has been abominably unjust and cruel is the treatment of Ulster's Catholic minority. This has given emotional appeal and plausibility to irredentism among the Catholics, and to Republican claims for the annexation of the North. But these are no more "just" than German claims of a generation ago to the Sudetenland, or, say, an American claim to Saskatchewan if some minority there should ask for annexation and be badly treated for it.

But notions also die. Deprived of their imperial citizenship, Northern Protestants have now tried to maintain their ascendancy under a cloak of democ-

*The East and West Indian immigration of recent decades is changing this to some extent. But the change is not significant in this context.

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racy which is threadbare even in the limited context of Ulster, because it means in practice the tyranny of a majority. This does not accord with the Western sense of democracy and has made the Protestants unpopular in the United Kingdom. Once the iniquity of their rule was exposed and forced into the public gaze, there might have been a chance of gradual (if reluctant) acceptance of reform and the real participation of Catholics in the political life of the province. Terrorism has not brought these things closer but pushed them further away—which is naturally part of the terrorists' deliberate intention.

So we find Yeats's house of the starling empty indeed, or rather filled with confusion. In Ulster a bellowing demagogue marches his Protestant goons up the hill and marches them down again, while the armed terrorists who are his avatars engage in lethal shadow play, egged on by their vicariously thrilled, ignorant, and bigoted American rooting section. The real context of it all is the United Kingdom and Ireland together, where traditional political notions are under attack from Jacobin fascists on the Left and neo-Nazis on the Right, feeding like maggots on a rotting economy while striving to aggravate its discontents. In the United Kingdom, pressure groups spurn an older consensus of balance and careful progress, allowing little patience or time for the organic movement of democratic change. Demands for solutions in the form of theatrical or sudden gestures are loud both in parliament and on the streets, and they are redoubled by the squawks of concerned but ill-informed people abroad.

These people are right to see a danger in Ulster, but wrong to suppose that it lies in British "inflexibility," i.e., the refusal of the government to appease the terrorists and/or "unify Ireland." The enormous expense of Ulster—a major burden even for the United Kingdom—plus a mass of frightened and bellicose Protestants would in the present recession seriously destabilize the Republic, which is why its government wants none of it. At the same time the shock to the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, from a government seen to cave in before an unpopular and unrepresentative insurrection, would give a strong boost to separatists there, and to political extremists on both wings: the Right would be fortified by outrage and the Left by a scent of possible victory. Without a dramatic fall in unemployment and some surging improvement in the economy (neither of which is likely), there would be a chance (an off-chance perhaps, but a chance) of disturbance in Britain following such a withdrawal, in which extremists would find the opportunity of moving from talk to action, with some prospect of success.

But the people of the British Isles are resilient. With a modicum of luck and (if patience is in abeyance) stubbornness, and with less international kibitzing, their traditions may well survive economic misfortune and the revanchist hatreds which have so corrupted the politics of Northern Ireland. If the pall does lift and the industries of Britain and Ireland pick up again, sectarian differences can come to have less force than they have had in the workless ghettos of Ulster, and in the stultified agricultural backwater which Southern Ireland once was. In the North, with more for Catholic and Protestant to get and spend, and with a more active British interest in the rights of Catholics, the border may one day seem less of a threat, confounding the conventional wisdom which sees Ulster as an "intractable problem" not to be solved, but only dissolved from time to time in blood. Eventually the Republic may indeed spread its notion to the shores of Derry, Antrim, and Down, with Belfast and Londonderry still as British as Dublin is now. But even if that does not happen and the ritual separation of North and South remains (for like the separation of Britain and the Irish Republic it is just that: a ritual), the need to survive in a fiercely competitive world must inevitably push together the interests of the British and the Irish.

Whatever the dreams of the terrorists (and their friends in the United States), the logic of the past 800 years is not for them but against them. This period has seen, not a continual struggle to separate, but a gradual and inexorable merging of interests and peoples in these islands. As the Celts, with their language and culture, replaced an older people, so the Celts in their turn have been replaced; their world is gone, and no amount of rhetoric, historical fantasy, gunfire, or gelignite can bring it back now. If the people of the British Isles are divided for the time being by prejudice and abstractions, the division is still not as deep or as wide as some would like to make it. Such political wounds can be healed by necessity, and by notions which are less mean and parochial than those which made them.

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Criticism Without Constraint

Frederick Crews

EVEN to a superficial observer, it must be apparent by now that the academic study of literature has fallen upon anxious times. The outward symptoms are unmistakable: tenure track openings for new Ph.D.'s have all but disappeared, graduate programs have been trimmed, and undergraduates have been deserting the English major for more vocationally oriented programs. And these palpable setbacks have intensified soul-searching among those who remain within the profession or who hope that it will somehow find room for them. Is literary criticism really needed? Does it constitute a legitimate discipline or only a pastime? And can there be any justification for the old faith—now professed only with apology or irony—in the historical study of authors and periods, when the only student enthusiasm we can rely on is borrowed from such topical domains as feminism, science fiction, and popular culture?

There is, to be sure, one conspicuous sign of vitality in "English," namely, an unprecedented excitement over literary theory emanating from the continent. The glow of cosmopolitanism, however, may prove after all to be mere hectic on the patient's cheek. The terms that now cause pulses to race—deconstruction, dissemination, epistemes, the mirror stage, and the like—are so undescriptive of literary detail that they tend not so much to explain literature as to replace it. And whether or not the theories of the hour are warranted, they scarcely offer a lasting antidote to the prevailing mood of restlessness and doubt. Either by design or by consequence, they are directed *against* the main task of criticism as it is still widely conceived—that is, as the pursuit of meaning that authors presumably impart to their works in creating them.

There can be no mistaking the fact that the study of meaning has now been vigorously contested. Some theorists hold that such study is always marred by a simplistic equation of meaning with the mental states of authors before or during the act of composition. A preoccupation with meaning, they say, leads to an undervaluing of conventional elements that are crucial to the way literature is perceived. But that cogent point is in itself no menace to academic business as usual. The real challenge comes from theorists—let me call them *indeterminists*—who argue that meaning is conferred not by authors but by readers, and that a work's meaning is therefore constantly subject to change. If that position is accepted, meaning ceases to be a stable object of inquiry and one interpretation is as lacking in persuasiveness as any other. The inevitable corollary is that debates among critics are entirely pointless. Such is the conclusion urged by the most influential of contemporary schools, Jacques Derrida's "deconstructionists," who claim that the "evidence" marshaled for any given interpretation is simply an artifact of that interpretation. If the deconstructionists are right, the greater part of our criticism has consisted of exercises in self-delusion.

But *are* they right? Indeterminist arguments are often so hard to follow that their arbitrariness goes unnoticed. Who has demonstrated that meaning originates with readers? The decision to say that texts do or don't bear authorially determined meaning is not an empirical matter but one of methodological and even temperamental convenience. If we want to believe that a work's meaning became fixed forever in the act of its creation, all we need to do is say so. Then, following E. D. Hirsch, Jr., we can distinguish between meaning and "significance"—the coloration that literature acquires by assimilation into each reader's unique consciousness.* In this light, indeterminists have shown only that *significance* is volatile, a fact that everyone already knows.

Despite its elusiveness and potential tediousness, there is much to be said for retaining the idea of determinate meaning. For one thing, it agrees with the intuitively plausible notion that authors write in a purposive spirit. For another, it gives us invariant objects of investigation and an impersonal criterion of interpretive adequacy. That is, we can prefer one reading to another if we are shown that it suits better with what the author could have possi-

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*See E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (Yale, 1967) and *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago, 1976).

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bly wanted to communicate. Around such a standard we can gather (or preserve) an intellectual community devoted to accurate knowledge of important texts and of the cultural past. In a word, we hold onto criticism as a relatively orderly institution that shares the goals and findings of historical scholarship.

But institutions, precisely because they impose constraints on their members, can inspire subtle forms of rebellion. Theorists who effectively deny the existence of meaning would seem to be expressing such rebellion. In some cases, perhaps, they object on ideological grounds to the cultural tradition that gets treated so reverently by "normal" critics. Or perhaps they want to write more expressively than rationally, and would like to hold up some liberating doctrine against their would-be judges. Whatever the grievance, by embracing indeterminism they cry for more freedom, even at the expense of removing literary works from their authors' control.

Let us be careful to note the difference between *denying the privileged character* of authorial meaning and merely *studying something else*. A good many legitimate issues—regarding genre, convention, influence, structure, and style—can be addressed without direct reference to meaning, and an indeterminist can write usefully about such issues if he decides (however inconsistently) to exempt them from his relativistic outlook. Yet the record of theorizing by critics who hope to *break the authority* of meaning is singularly unimpressive, for reasons I would like to explore. It seems that the dismissal of authorial purpose tends also to be a dismissal of scholarly prudence. For, if the author's inferrable intentions are to be put out of mind, the only remaining guide is the theorist himself, now awash in literary data that will be compliant to even an eccentric and ill-considered idea.

Insofar as indeterminists entertain a "scientific" purpose, it is to learn exactly how literature is registered by "the reader," without whose mental activity a text would be considered only black squiggles on a page. But what in fact is known about this reader, and who is he really? Is he an experimental subject hooked up to electrodes as he sweats his way through "Dover Beach"? Is he the individual critic writ large? Or is he perhaps a composite of all the critics whose views about a certain work have been taken seriously? "The reader" fails to provide the slightest actual guidance. For, if he is not conceived as an everyman whose mind is unavailable to inspection, then he is only a precipitate of one or more interpretations that have been arrived at in the usual way—not through some pristine encounter with the text but through rereading, reflection, immersion in previous criticism, and trial and error. That halting, irreplaceable process is necessarily oriented to a norm—congruence with discernible intention—lying outside any reader's psychology.

IF ANYONE could argue his way past the difficulties besetting anti-intentional theory, it would be Stanley Fish of Johns Hopkins. An indeterminist who departs from the pack by being consistently clear, logical, and devoid of Left Bank affectation, Fish has earned a name as the shrewdest and most rhetorically brilliant of "reader-response" theorists. In fact, however, he has ended by quarreling chiefly with his own unsustainable ideas. His several theoretical retreats—all presented as bold discoveries—constitute eloquent testimony to the speciousness of supposing that one has been initiated into the confidence of "the reader."

Fish's odyssey began not with a direct challenge to authorial control, but with an ingenious variant of it. In *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1971), he claimed that Milton *wanted* us to misread his elaborately suspended sentences—forming premature conclusions as we struggled from phrase to phrase—so that he could repeatedly "surprise" us and thereby remind us of our fallen state. But if this was indeed Milton's aim, the real surprise is that it went unnoticed for three hundred years, until one reader happened upon it. As Fish explains in a book containing his influential essays of the past decade, his original contention had to be covered by an even more implausible one: that all other readers had "really" experienced *Paradise Lost* just as he did, "even though they may not (consciously) know it, and . . . if they will only listen to me they will learn how to recognize the configurations of the experience they have always had."*

Though Fish's theory was clever to a fault, the reader it invoked was a dunce—a Charlie Brown who, having had the syntactic football yanked away a hundred times, would keep right on charging it with perfect innocence, never learning to suspend judgment until he arrived at the poet's verb. Of course the author of *Surprised by Sin* could never have been such a dysfunctional reader of Milton or anyone else. It could only be a matter of time before Fish, a man who takes objections seriously even as he makes a show of refuting them, would have to abandon the whole project of masquerading as "the reader." Yet meanwhile he found himself launched on a paradigmatic career as an "advanced" theorist. There could be no collapse into historically tempered interpretation after he had been perceived, with a gratitude and an outrage that were equally flattering, as the bearer of an exciting anti-traditionalist methodology.

A record of Fish's progress through the 70's would show, first, how he felt compelled to replace "the reader" with any number of readers, none of whom could be counted on to share any of the others' literary experience; second, how he gradually, with understandable misgivings, recognized

*Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities, Harvard, 394 pp., $17.50.

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that this conception undermined all sense of the text as a fixed entity; and finally, how his discomfort with the resultant subjectivism issued in yet another doctrine, that "interpretive communities," not individuals or texts, confer meaning, and that within one such (wholly undefined) community the meaning of a work is stable and certain.

Thus Fish, the student of line-by-line reader response, no longer even pretends to know how people behave in the presence of literature. In his flight both from authorially sanctioned meaning and from the dubieties of his own "affective stylistics," he has arrived at a total determinism whereby the individual reader or critic is merely a "product" of his community; every text now has a (deceptive) "structure of meanings that is obvious and inescapable from the perspective of whatever interpretive assumptions happen to be in force." Starting as a maverick, Fish has become a Pangloss; you can't go wrong because you are always within a community that tells you exactly what to think.*

This contention slanders every critic who has ever altered his views on a controversy out of regard for a superior argument. And if meanings are obvious and inescapable, how does Fish account for the drawn-out interpretive disputes in which he once took such emphatic delight? Could anyone believe that members of the same interpretive community never disagree? Fish's last-ditch theory is falsified by the entire history of criticism, including his own history of skipping from theory to theory without detectably changing "communities."

BUT of course Fish is only one "scientific" indeterminist among many. To get some idea of whether others are faring better, we may look briefly at a new book by a sympathetic commentator, Jonathan Culler's *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*.† The same author's *Structuralist Poetics*** has for some years been the most circumspect introduction to the critical uses of French linguistic structuralism, a mode of thought whose paramount strategy is to bypass "the subject," alias the meaning-conferring author. Culler hopes that structuralist discipline will enable us to grasp each literary genre as a semiotic system—as a network of signs that take their significance not from authorial purpose or from any reference to the outside world, but from their unconsciously registered relations with each other. And now he has expanded his survey of semiotic theories, meanwhile trying to make room for Jacques Derrida's "post-structuralist" critique, which threatens to "deconstruct" any laws or patterns that the critic might want to regard as irreducible.

One minor symptom of the times is that Culler has become more adamantly "theoretical" in the period between *Structuralist Poetics* and his latest statement. While in the first book he claimed that structuralism offers both "a theory of literature and a mode of interpretation," by now he is determined to pass, as his first chapter insists, "Beyond Interpretation." The idea that critics should spend their time delving into the meaning of individual works, he says, has been the cardinal impediment to "a comprehensive theory of fictions." Such a theory, Culler leads us to believe, cannot remain out of reach if we only shift our attention from thematic questions to the deepest laws of reading.

When he considers what the opponents of traditional literary meaning have accomplished thus far, however, Culler is reperatedly disappointed, even vexed. Norman Holland's effort to affix all responsibility for meaning onto the invariant "identity themes" of readers, for example, strikes him as nothing more than "a vulgarized and sentimentalized version of the New Criticism, with organic unity transferred from the work of art to the entire 'text' of a person's life." According to Culler, Harold Bloom's oedipal version of textuality is diminished by an assumption that each work of art can have only one "precursor" text with which it conducts an anxious dialogue. Roman Jakobson's system of linguistic analysis founders on its lack of any criterion for determining which features are significant for readers. Hans Robert Jauss's "reception aesthetics" fails to transcend the forbidden ambition of supplying "historically authorized interpretation," and Michael Riffaterre's search for "the word or sentence from which [each poem] is generated and of which its every element is a variant" is "much too crude and reductive." Riffaterre's enterprise too "is continually deflected by the temptations of interpretation," as is that of another theorist we have already met, Stanley Fish. Culler begins by extravagantly praising Fish, but he ends by indicting him as timid, "bathetic," and guilty of "duplicity" for having "faked" the experience to which his theory of reader response pertains. One begins to wonder if what Culler calls "the general collapse and self-destruction of [Fish's] theory" isn't a prognosis for semiotics in general.

Although Culler himself would resist such a prognosis, the least we can say is that something appears to be fundamentally amiss here. Note the pattern: according to Culler, the theorist typically goes wrong either by regressing to interpretation—that is, seeking historically determinate meaning—or by allowing himself to be carried away by a pet idea. When the critic is guided by intentionality he forgets to be a structuralist, but when he liberates

*How can an indeterminist be a determinist as well? There is no contradiction. Precisely because Fish is dizzied by the consequences of his *authorial* indeterminism, he seeks anchorage in a rigid conception of interpretive communities, whose supposedly lockstep thought patterns—unsupported by a single example—counterbalance the total unknowability he now ascribes to literature. In short, an authoritarian notion comes to the rescue of an anarchic one that has turned unruly.

†Cornell, 242 pp., $15.00.

**Cornell, 1975.

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himself from intentionality he seems to become a crackpot. There appears to be no middle ground on which the star witness of semiotics, the reader, can take the stand. But we already know why not: "the reader" is simply the critic's marionette.

Even though Culler fails to see why structuralist thought about literature never fulfills its promise, *The Pursuit of Signs* deserves praise for its candor. Yet Culler himself betrays a defect that runs through nearly the entire range of indeterminist discourse: a dependence on empirically dubious sources of authority. Again and again he shows himself ideologically disposed to favor any celebrated thinker who maintains, in Levi-Strauss's quoted words, "that understanding consists in reducing one type of reality to another; that the true reality is never the most obvious; and that the nature of truth is already indicated by the care it takes to remain elusive." Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Durkheim, Saussure, Derrida, Althusser, Barthes, and Foucault appear in Culler's pages, not as proponents of ideas that bear testing, but as tutelary figures deserving of automatic honor. Culler seems unaware of the extent to which he is endorsing not a science of signs, but a narrow "school of suspicion" with an iconoclastic *parti pris.**

The trouble with embracing thinkers largely on the basis of their doctrinal radicalism is that one becomes less concerned with factuality than with keeping up in the rush to discard "reactionary" assumptions. Thus Culler, who has always been devoted to what he calls the "sober, unambiguous metalanguage" of semiotics, now finds himself saddled with the later Derrida, who requires that criticism be regarded as "*a pastime* or activity that is in and of the sign" (emphasis added). As Culler reports, this means that we eventually reach "not a discipline, not another mode of analysis, but acts of writing, acts of displacement, *play which violates language and reality*" (emphasis added).† New rules are suddenly in effect: even one's own analytic system must be deconstructed if one is not to be thought an intellectual rightist. Can Culler meet the challenge? Surely, he hazards, the contemporary critic need not "deem himself a poet or seize every opportunity to pun." But is he really sure? One can already hear the scandalized whispers that Culler is too incorrigibly earnest and rational, too "Anglo-Saxon," to be a trustworthy message bearer from Paris to the New World. It will be interesting to see if his forthcoming book, *On Deconstruction*, manages to display a sufficient degree of the impishness which has now become *de rigueur*.

If, as seems apparent, the refusal to acknowledge authorial meaning rarely yields more than trifling results—if it even leads, in one manifestation, to a program of reducing criticism to a sandbox amusement for the ultra-sophisticated—we must wonder why it attracts such fervor. To address that question we must leave behind such relatively scrupulous theorists as Culler and Fish and attend to the ideological flavor of indeterminism as a movement. The main bogey of that movement, though it sometimes appears to be bourgeois consciousness or American provincialism or empirical prudence or authority in general, is clearly conventional literary study. Evidently we are witnessing an internal wave of protest whose activists, by decreeing meaning to be null and void, seek to cancel the gains in literary knowledge achieved by their less agitated colleagues and predecessors. Somehow they feel sullied and embarrassed by the humdrum business of literary research; they want us to know that they have said goodbye to all that.

It is not difficult to see how such a movement could take hold, especially in an academic population whose affinities lie at least as much with the artist's romantic liberty as with the scientist's control. Once it has been established that the normal task of criticism is to interpret texts and that we must prefer those interpretations which are most consistent with authorial intention, the scene has been prepared for claustrophobia. What will remain to be said about a finite number of works that are becoming better and better understood? That question—or better, that groundless fear, for it ignores the way changes in methodology generate new issues to be addressed—haunts a critical industry whose reckless growth in the quarter-century after World War II has now been succeeded by a painful stagnation; the sense that "everything has been done" turns to panic as opportunities for appointment and promotion disappear. Such a climate is ideally suited to nurturing a mania for theories, however poorly supported, that promise to multiply the number of allowable remarks one can make about literature.

Yet this cannot be the whole story, for indeterminism arrives at our shores by first-class passage, in the hands of renowned American critics whose future is hardly in jeopardy. They are not supplicants but dictators of academic style. Although they appear, in championing indeterminism, to be turning away from their own impressive achievements as interpreters, only a fool would take them for revolutionaries. We may guess that for them at least, the "freedom" I mentioned earlier has less to

*"Although [the "human sciences"] begin by making man an object of knowledge," Culler writes, "these disciplines find, as their work advances, that the self is dissolved as its various functions are ascribed to impersonal systems which operate through it." One would infer from such a sentence that the abolition of the human subject in structuralist thought is effected through empirical discovery rather than by fiat. Yet Culler himself cites testimony to the contrary by Foucault and Levi-Strauss, who announce, respectively, that man "is only a recent invention, . . . a simple fold in our knowledge" and that "The goal of the human sciences is not to constitute man but to dissolve him."

†Cf. *Structuralist Poetics*, where Culler could still assert that "the range of meanings which a line of verse can bear depends on the fact that numerous other meanings are manifestly impossible." By 1981 standards, such a remark reveals a deplorable want of "playfulness."

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do with anti-academic feeling than with a wish to fend off certain potential intrusions upon elite sensibility.

In order to explore this hunch, let me turn finally to two recent books by Geoffrey H. Hartman, the Karl Young Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Yale. The more recent work, *Saving the Text: Literature / Derrida / Philosophy*,* strikingly exemplifies the frothiness of "theory" in the Derridean mode. But the earlier one, *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today*,† is even more telling, for as a highly defensive reply to opponents of "the hermeneutical Mafia," it places on view all the hostilities and confusions that go to make up the full-blown indeterminist spirit. These books, moreover, invite study because their author—a senior fellow of the School of Criticism and Theory, a trustee of the English Institute, and a member of the executive council of the Modern Language Association—has long been recognized as a preeminent American critic. His own progress, which I will not pause to recount, from historically informed interpretation to vapid attitudinizing could stand for the fate of much "advanced" academic discourse over the past two decades.

Hartman is quite aware of belonging to a movement of resistance to a continued concern for meaning. He even gives the movement a name, *revisionism*, which points to its essentially oppositional purpose. In championing the revisionists, he has in mind chiefly himself and his Yale colleagues Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Harold Bloom, and Jacques Derrida, who shuttles between Paris and New Haven. But lest he be thought parochial, Hartman admits as tentative members such further enemies of "objective" reading as Stanley Fish (a Yale Ph.D.), Fredric Jameson (now at Yale), Hans-Georg Gadamer, H.R. Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, and Norman Holland. If he is only lukewarmly supportive of this secondary group, it is not because he specifically disputes their ideas, but because he fears they have not altogether forsworn the quest to discover what literary works are about. Through precept and example Hartman urges us not to "methodize indeterminacy" by merely shifting the source of meaning from authors to readers. As he says in an untypically straightforward sentence, "contemporary criticism aims at a hermeneutics of indeterminacy."

HARTMAN thus stakes out a critical turf somewhat to the Left of Jonathan Culler's. Instead of hoping to uncover universal laws of literary response (and then to assure us that they are offered just in fun), he strives unabashedly to keep conclusions at bay. The critics he admires are those whose language is "curiously unprogressive or exitless." Their work "reveals contradictions and equivocations, and so makes fiction interpretable by making it less readable. The fluency of the reader is affected by a kind of stutter: the critic's response becomes deliberately hesitant." And the prince of stutterers is the later Derrida, whose "exhibitionistic" and "interminable"—these are terms of forgiving fondness—treatise called *Glas* supplies us not with anything so vulgar as ideas, but with "a chain of secondary elaborations stretching to infinity."

Hartman himself is never more at home than when recapitulating the "sense of débris" that pervades *Glas* or in trying his own hand at the recommended form of verbal doodling:

> That the word "knot" may echo in the mind as "not" is one of those small changes that analyst or exegete are [*sic*] trained to hear. "When thou hast done, thou hast not done." There are so many knots: Donnean, Penelopean, Lacanian, Borromean, Derridean. At the beginning of *Glas*, the similarity in sound of *Sa* (acronym for "savoir absolu") and *Sa* ("signifiant") is such a knot with a positive philosophic yield. Yet because of the equivocal, echo-nature of language, even identities or homophonies sound on: the sound of *Sa* is knotted with that of *ça*, as if the text were signaling its intention to bring Hegel, Saussure, and Freud together. *Ça* corresponds to the Freudian Id ("Es"); and it may be that our only "savoir absolu" is that of a *ça* structured like the *Sa*-signifiant: a bacchic or Lacanian "primal process" where only signifier-signifying-signifiers exist. . . .
>
> Enough you say. But Derrida adds: "Reste ici ou glas qu'on ne peut arrêter." In his pamphlet on Adami, Derrida plays further on IC, which now reappears in the form of ICH ("I" or "Je"), the abbreviated ICH (TOS) symbol for Christ (see the fish of Adami's picture), and by chiastic reversal both the chiasmus itself (X) transliterated as CHI, and the querulous pronoun QUI. Freeplay reaches here a methodical craziness that parallels Christopher Smart's. But taken altogether a series of slippery signifiers has now established itself on the basis of the problematics of the subject, its construction and subversion. Though this verbal gematria is no more, no less, persuasive than Lacan's diagrammatia, it has the same treacherously memorable effect, as if Lacan's imaginary and symbolic realms had finally come together in a sort of *specular script*.
>
> Let me try to formulate this basic mirror-writing as
>
> IC (ICH / CHI) INRI
>
> I have added the last term, the acronym of Christ on the Cross, to that crossing or chiasmic middle term, which stands for the problematics of subject or ego, and to the first term, which evokes, together with the initials of Christ and the first syllable of ICarus (as in "la voie/voix d'Icare"), the Immaculate Conception.

I quote at such length because, as can be seen, Hartman's most indulgent mode departs so sharp-

*Johns Hopkins, 184 pp., $12.95.
†Yale, 323 pp., $18.00.

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ly from ordinary critical writing as to beggar description. Here is a self-congratulatory hermeticism whose purpose seems to lie somewhere between the dropping of names, the displaying of tidbits of esoterica, and the muddling of agency. In this ghostly prose, sounds echo, similarities appear, a text is almost signalling its intention, the Lacanian primal process hums along, and a series of slippery signifiers establishes itself—as if neither Hartman nor Derrida had anything to do with these stage effects.

Given Hartman's aspirations toward inconclusiveness, it may seem anomalous that in *Saving the Text* he also puts forward a general theory of literature. But there is little danger of his being too easily understood. At times he appears to be proposing that literature originates in "a primal word-wound" which, conveniently for the theorist, has undergone such transformation that its traces are no longer available for study. Elsewhere he hints that literary form "saves the text" from the maddening openness, the impossibility of closure, that Derrida ascribes to language. But then again, the main idea of his book, "inspired," as he confides, "by French reflections," may be that "literature is the elaboration of a specular name"—whatever *that* means. It would be tacky to ask for specifics from a writer who disarmingly announces, "I cannot find it in myself to worry the question of the relation of empirical evidence to theory. . . ." According to revisionist etiquette, theory "should not impose or lacerate but *allow in others—in the world itself—an unconstrained response*" (emphasis added). One must cultivate an exquisite vagueness if such a response is to be achieved.

Thus Hartman goes well beyond Culler and Fish in reconciling himself to the continental view that criticism is less a body of propositions than a branch of literature to be cherished for its affective power. In *Criticism in the Wilderness* he sets out to repeal "[t]he automatic valuing of works of art over works of commentary," to lift criticism from its "second-class status in the world of letters." As opposed to Matthew Arnold, who called the epochs of Aeschylus and Shakespeare "the promised land, toward which criticism can only beckon," Hartman suggests that perhaps "we are forerunners to ourselves"—that is, that criticism is already our outstanding literary genre.

In order to match "the primacy of art," Hartman believes, critics must marshal a "near-daemonic" force, an extravagance or "brilliance" which "liberates the critical activity from its positive or reviewing function." The criticism he admires is therefore that which deserves to be called "digressive," "outrageous," "freakish," even "ridiculous," for that way lies the Sublime. And if Hartman's own prose, with its indefinite musing, its cautious good manners, and its superabundant allusiveness, seems deficient in the required frenzy, we need only recall that language in general, according to the latest Gallic conception, is already "mad," "treacherous," "insidious," "vertiginous," and so forth. Do we not all experience "the fear (a thrilling fear) of the abyss in all words whose resonance haunts us and must be appeased"? If readers fail to appreciate the steely courage of critics who dare to navigate this void, it must be because they find "a possible loss of boundaries" to be just "too threatening." Even boredom, it seems, is a form of defensive homage to the extremity of revisionist heroics.

WHAT readers may think, however, is of less moment to Hartman than what critics require for themselves. On that subject he is cryptic but usefully suggestive. "The revisionists," he tells us, "challenge the attitude that condemns the writer of criticism or commentary to nonliterary status and a service function. To that extent they are a political movement that attacks the isolation of the critic: isolation within the university and from broader, more public issues, but isolation also from inwardness and philosophical concerns." We have already explored one of the key terms in this revealing statement, *nonliterary status*, and we may be sure that by *philosophical concerns* Hartman intends the standard Nietzschean line: "the drive of the interpretive mind to revise or reverse, to unmask itself as well as its object, to penetrate so deeply that everything human is alien to it...." But what about the other terms: *political movement, service function, isolation from inwardness*? To see what Hartman means by those phrases is to locate the little eddy of American academic culture within which his exhortations might be considered meaningful and even welcome.

Our problem today, Hartman opines, lies with those who would "separate out, *bureaucratically*, the functions of critic and artist" (emphasis added). The idea of acquiring definite knowledge of literature conjures to his mind the specter of "technocratic, predictive, or authoritarian formulas," of a "monumental, totalizing system," even of "a managerial society full of technicians, operators, language therapists, a department of discourse control and emendation." A national emergency! And closer to home, our favorite books "are in danger of being routinized or contaminated by endless readings forced out of industrious hordes of students." To forestall such an outcome, Hartman implies, elite critics must become Luddites in the factories of meaning production. By staunchly refusing to reach conclusions about literature, they will help to preserve "inwardness" from the ravages of middle-class rationality and homogeneity.

Not least among the questions raised by such a "politics" is whether its intended beneficiaries include anyone besides the revisionist critics themselves. What, for example, about those "industrious hordes of students" whose parents are paying the critics' salaries? Does Hartman wish to instruct them in techniques of meaning avoidance,

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and if so, does he think they will thereby become keener thinkers, more humane readers, better citizens? The answer, so far as one can tell, is that he disprizes those students and has no interest in addressing their educational needs. The critic, says Hartman in another anti-technocratic sally, "if he practices in an English department, . . . carves and trims and patches and binds the prose of future leaders destined to build or destroy the economy"; he is nothing more than "a retainer to those in our society who want not the difficult reality but merely the illusion of literacy." Even the purest revisionists are regrettably "tainted by the odor of academic life: secure, yes, but also service-ridden. *For the university has opened its doors*" (emphasis added).

Here, I think, we arrive at the heart of the problem: colleges are no longer the finishing schools of yore. Yet revisionists with power can at least decline to be "hired grammarians" for those semiliterates who have been, as Hartman puts it none too delicately, "dislocated into institutes of Higher Education." And they can keep 'em guessing about the mysteries of criticism. If "[t]he 'service function' imposed on English departments . . . contributes to dividing literary studies into the grind of 'communication' or 'rhetoric' courses as against high-stepping intellectual entertainment"—why, Hartman simply opts for the entertainment.

Despite its arrogance, however, *Criticism in the Wilderness* is a distinctly melancholy collection of statements. It abounds in references to "resentful and lonely" critics whose colleagues misunderstand them and who are paid too little for undergoing "a routine that can seriously hamper self-development." Although Hartman repeatedly disparages what he elsewhere calls "academic-rotarian" professors who crave definite ideas, he complains bitterly against critics who "carp at critics" and who "bite or bark at their own kind." And his concluding proposal that students of law and medicine be required to study literary interpretation, presumably along the lines of the "hermeneutic highjinks" that he favors, is as wistful as it is devoid of a rationale.

Thus Hartman's campaign against isolation does not as yet appear to be a notable success. Nor could it be, given his renunciation of rationally based choice between competing theories, hypotheses, and interpretations. The vision of a community of investigators, whether within or between disciplines, is a phantom unless the parties involved acknowledge grounds of evidential appeal. And the fact that Hartman hasn't quite decided what he wants—is it fraternity, recognition, or mere exemption from the "service" that underlings will still be required to perform?—only renders his situation more pathetic. His tentative brief for boldness, his decorous critique of decorum, his politics of educational disdain—what are they, if not the marks of a mandarinism whose intellectual pretexts have dropped away?

OBVIOUSLY, Hartman's attitude cannot be taken to stand for those of all critics who advocate indeterminism. Even Stanley Fish, though he appears farther than ever from a believable conception of how critics arrive at their views, has repented of once having written that his dismissal of objectivity "relieves me of the obligation to be right . . . and demands only that I be interesting. . . ." And Jonathan Culler may remind us that some indeterminists sincerely believe they are being "scientific" in trying to dispense with intentionality.

Yet by now it should be clear that despite the variety of moods, indeterminism as a movement bears implications that are both irrationalist and undemocratic. To be sure, not every indeterminist matches Hartman's sarcasm in speaking of the deteriorating "varnish" and "veneer" of "this ideal of a freemasonry or grand democratic concourse of polyphonic yet pacific persons." But in disparaging the evidential grounds on which scholars and critics can address one another's ideas, indeterminists create a vacuum that can only be filled by cliquish power. A whole department or university operating without regard for independent rules of judgment would be barbaric in principle if not in outward demeanor.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that indeterminists amount to some sinister public force. Even when they write of terror and revolt it is only in order to strike a modern attitude; no one appears headed from Yale Station to the Finland Station. On the contrary, the indeterminists are for the most part mild-mannered professors who are trying to fend off discouraging thoughts about the waning importance of criticism. They have much in common with those colleagues who greet their movement not with eagerness to test its cogency, but with bland, incomprehending gratitude that *something* is still happening within a comatose field. For on one side and the other—that of "philosophical" affectation and that of routine exegesis—assumptions remain largely unexamined. If shopworn ideas about nothingness and meaninglessness are still allowed to pass for breakthroughs in theory, the fault may lie less in our superstars than in ourselves.

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Collaboration Par Excellence

Roger Kaplan

THE conventional image of France during World War II is similar to that of Belgium in World War I: a nation trampled upon by the Hun, but in its soul unvanquished. In this picture, a small clique of unrepresentative reactionaries took over the country under the protection of the German army and proceeded, in the abject setting of Vichy, to help the Nazis do their work while the heroic Resistance did what it could to salvage French honor, help the Allies in the war effort, and rescue the victims of fascist persecution.

Like all myths, this one has elements of truth in it. First of all, it is certainly true that France, after the debacle of May-June 1940, was trampled upon by the Germans, who, while they did not behave as viciously as they did in the East, were not exactly magnanimous in victory. Two million Frenchmen were put into POW camps in Germany. Astronomical sums in reparations were levied upon the defeated country. Industrial and agricultural sectors were requisitioned for the German war effort. Alsace and Lorraine were annexed to Germany.

It is also correct that the Vichy government of Marshal Pétain, a regime legally constituted by the last assembly of the Third Republic, was drawn from a small clique of disaffected men who had known little success in the Republic, though they and the elements they represented had had a substantial influence on French culture since the 1890's. With few exceptions—notably Pierre Laval—the men who ran the Pétain government had been unable to win the voters' support either for themselves or for their policies. Drawn largely from the circles around Charles Maurras's *Action Française*, they claimed to speak for some sort of French authenticity that Frenchmen in their majority, by the evidence of two generations of democratic opportunity, did not recognize.

As for those Frenchmen who made up the Paris-based collaborationist parties, they were, if anything, even less representative of the nation. In some cases more Nazi than the Nazis, in others fanatic Germanophiles, twilight characters, or morbid opportunists, the Paris collaborationists spent a good deal of time denouncing Pétain's government for being insufficiently fierce in its repression of Jews and Gaullists. In late 1942, when the *zone libre* was occupied in response to the Allied landing in North Africa, they in fact displaced a number of Pétainists in the government. Thus in particular the fanatic anti-Semite, Darquier de Pellepoix, took over the Jewish Affairs section from the "moderate" Xavier Vallat, and the brutal Joseph Darnand was given the go-ahead to organize the para-police that became the notorious *Milice*.

Finally, it is certainly true that there was a Resistance. A small number of soldiers and public figures rallied to de Gaulle in the summer of 1940, and it is possible to claim, as he does in his memoirs, that a legitimate French authority, which had had no part in the armistice with Germany, was a continuous reality, and that by keeping its engagements to England and Poland it earned its place in the final victory. (De Gaulle, a member of the last government of the Third Republic, disputed Vichy's legality throughout the war.) On the other hand it would be wrong to assert that there was an internal Resistance from the start, outside of isolated acts of sabotage and self-sacrifice; but one did develop gradually and was unified in 1943, at least formally, under de Gaulle's leadership.

Beyond this, however, the popular image of France in the war is indeed a myth. That many Frenchmen fought heroically against Nazism is an ineradicable and noble chapter in French history, but it cannot negate the fact that a great many more, whether they liked it or not, accepted the German Occupation and made the best they could of it. The truth is that France was the collaborationist country *par excellence*.

Thoughtful and honest observers have never disputed this. Indeed, after the war the French themselves acknowledged it, at least implicitly, by carrying out a purge that killed more Frenchmen, by some reckonings, than had been killed by the Germans. In his memoirs, de Gaulle does not try to dissimulate the smallness of his movement; on the contrary. But the myth took hold because it was convenient, especially in a France distracted by the problems of the 1950's and 1960's. The synthesis, as it were, that was achieved between the myth and the reality was the idea that French behavior may have been pretty awful, but it was all due to the presence of a brutal occupying power; for all their sins, the Vichy collaborators had at least shielded the French, including the Jews, from the worst.

This version of events has not survived serious historical scrutiny. With the recent partial opening of French archives for the period, it is being demolished completely. The term "collaboration" is strictly correct: the French participated, they aided and abetted, they were hand-in-glove with the Nazis in their most wicked enterprises. France took part, voluntarily, in the Holocaust.

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The two classic statements justifying the collaborationist policy of Vichy were Laval's "I desire a German victory, which alone can save Europe from Bolshevism" and Pétain's "I am following the road of collaboration" with the occupier. For those who have wished to save the reputation of Vichy, at least by contrast to the out-and-out collaborationist party, these statements have been judged to be qualitatively different from the ones emanating from such sources as the novelist Céline, who remarked, "There is only one anti-Jewish and pacifist force in the world: the German army." They are also taken to signify a willingness to cooperate only in order to safeguard France's international position, and thus to reflect an essentially neutralist thrust. *"La France seule,"* Maurras had put it, and he was known to be Anglophobic and Germanophobic as well as anti-Semitic.

But this was not so. Pétain collaborated and Laval favored the triumph of German arms for reasons of domestic policy as well. To put it simply: they required a German shield, while expecting a German victory, to carry out their own national revolution. That revolution, falsely summarized in the slogan *"Travail, Famille, Patrie,"* which replaced the "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" of 1789, required a solution to the Jewish question no less than did the National Socialist revolution next door.

The slogan of the *revolution nationale* echoed the reactionary agenda of the enemies of the liberal republicanism embodied in the Third Republic. This agenda was nativist, illiberal, and chauvinist. While the reactionaries themselves traced their roots all the way back to the monarchist ideology of Joseph de Maistre, the real kernel of their thought was to be found in the anti-Semitic, anti-democratic agitation of the 1890's, the focal point of which was the drawn-out Dreyfus affair. The importance of anti-Semitism in the political and literary milieus that came out of this period cannot be overestimated. The far Right saw France as corrupted by debilitating and alien forces—notably, democratic ideas and Jews. The institution that had welcomed these forces was the Republic. Hence, it was permissible to destroy the Republic by any means necessary, bullets as well as ballots. And, for all practical purposes, Maurras prescribed both. (When an attempt was made on Léon Blum's life, Maurras was arrested for incitement to murder.) New institutions—ideally, the monarchy—would be needed to return to France a homogeneity and a sense of order that the extreme Right imagined to have characterized the pre-1789 past.

Hence, it was altogether logical in October 1940 for Vichy to pass a series of laws which were a Gallic version of the Nuremberg decrees and which, so to speak, paved the way to Auschwitz with legal cobblestones. These and subsequent laws, one by one, permitted the confiscation of Jewish property, forbade Jews from practicing certain professions (teaching, the media, etc.), restricted their residences and their access to public places, and finally denaturalized Jewish immigrants. These laws were not passed at the request of the Germans.

As Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton write in their somber and excellent new book, *Vichy France and the Jews,** "Years of scrutiny of the records left by German services in Paris and Berlin have turned up no trace of German orders to Vichy in 1940...to adopt anti-Semitic legislation." This devastating study has made full use of the documentary records of the period. By doing so, it sweeps away the vestiges of the excuses that have been made, even by unquestioned anti-fascists, for official French behavior. "Once German policy as it was in 1940 is clearly understood," the authors write, "it becomes apparent that Vichy policy was no simple copy of it. Vichy mounted a competitive or rival anti-Semitism rather than a tandem one."

Marrus and Paxton divide the story into two main periods. During the first (1940-42), from the defeat to the occupation of the *zone libre* in response to the Allied invasion of North Africa, the prevailing doctrine seems to have been that of *"anti-sémitisme d'état."* Rooted in the thought of Maurras and directed by his friend, Xavier Vallat, this was an essentially nativist policy, based on the idea that France had to be cleansed of all alien presences. The aim, by degrading as many Jews as possible to second-class citizenship while denaturalizing the rest, was to make France "French." Here some conflicts developed with the Germans because they, too, were pursuing a policy of expelling Jews, though in the East the more direct solution of killing them had already gotten under way. The French were trying to force recent immigrants back to where they came from (Germany and Poland), where it was known what fate awaited them, only to find the Germans refusing to take them.

There was probably a degree of sincerity in the Vichyites' claim at this time that they were protecting French Jews, that is, French-born Jews. It is certainly true that as the second period in the story began, the Nazis having set up the machinery for the Final Solution, the French did make an effort to deport foreign Jews first (the mechanics of deportation remained in their hands even in the occupied zone), and in fact three-quarters or more of French-born Jews survived. There is, of course, reason to worry about authorities who take pride in their capacity to make discriminations of this sort; at any rate, the Germans were not especially concerned about the order in which they killed the Jews.

When Darquier replaced Vallat, what remained of the fiction of Vichy autonomy disappeared. Darquier stood for the out-and-out racism of the Paris pro-Nazis, and with him came such hardliners as Darnand. The symbol of the second period of deportation was the huge roundup of Jews in Paris on July 16-17, 1942. It became known as the *rafle du Vel' d'Hiv'*, because it was to this indoor sports arena that the French police brought 12,884 Jews for transferral to the concentration camp at Drancy (from where, in all, some 70,000 were deported). Conditions at Drancy were abominable, and the breaking up of families that took place there was heartrending.

The brutalities of this period

*Basic Books, 432 pp., $20.95.

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undoubtedly pushed many Frenchmen into the Resistance, although there is no record that the Resistance tried to rescue Jews in a systematic way. Far more important in swelling the ranks of the Resistance was the STO, *Service du Travail Obligatoire*, the conscript labor for Germany. By the end of the war, France was supplying most of Germany's civilian manpower, and this provoked deep resentment.*

BY maintaining administrative control over the deportations—Germany fielded very few policemen, whether military or SS, in France throughout the war—the Vichyites evidently persuaded themselves that they were guarding their compatriots from a worse fate, such as that which had befallen Poland. What Marrus and Paxton point out, however, after having studied this arrangement in great detail, is that the Germans could not have asked for anything better. They may have had their complaints, and the extremists among them, like Danneker, Best, or the Paris-based SS chief Oberg, may really have believed that Vichy was soft on the Jews, but in view of the war requirements and the size of the country, they would have had to conclude they were well-served:

> In the summer and autumn of 1942, when the French police and administration put their hands to the task, some 42,500 Jews were deported from France to their deaths—perhaps one-third of them at Vichy's initiative from the unoccupied zone. When Vichy began to drag its feet in 1943, the number declined to 22,000 sent east in the year 1943. After the last use of French police in 1944, and despite feverish last-minute German efforts, the number deported up to August 1944 was 12,500. One can only speculate on how many fewer would have perished if the Nazis had been obligated to identify, arrest, and transport without any French assistance every Jew in France whom they wanted to slaughter.

INDEED, one can only speculate. The nearly complete collapse into moral ambiguity of the French elites in 1940 is a theme that has been bothering them since then. An infinitely sad and elegantly produced book, David Pryce-Jones's *Paris and the Third Reich*,† now takes its place in the fairly substantial collection of writing on this subject, while much of Herbert R. Lottman's *The Left Bank*,** a history of the Paris intelligentsia from the 1930's to the 1950's, covers the same ground with a focus mainly on the literary world.

The Germans' Occupation strategy consisted of setting one trap after another to reinforce the fact of French complicity in their crimes. The dilemma posed was: if you do not cooperate we will do it ourselves and it will be worse for you. The tactic was more subtle than is suggested by the usual image of the brutal Nazis, which is accurate enough for the East but less so for France. In the intellectual world, as both Pryce-Jones and Lottman show, the Germans behaved astutely. Censorship was by no means heavy-handed.

Choices could be made. The blackout of information was not very effective. Everyone knew what was going on, and in particular that the Allied war effort continued. Nevertheless, a goodly number of intellectuals collaborated overtly, writing in praise of the German side. Others, while not going so far, permitted their work to be published or their plays to be produced in German-approved forums. This lent an undeniable legitimacy to the collaborationist system. Sartre's plays *Les Mouches* ("The Flies") and *Huis Clos* ("No Exit") were produced to rave reviews in the German press (the French collaborationist press was less enthusiastic). The *Nouvelle Revue Française*—the most influential intellectual periodical in France—was turned over to the fascist writer Drieu la Rochelle (it never recovered), and while this provoked a break between him and Gide and Malraux, who refused to publish under German auspices, many prestigious writers continued doing business as usual.

Still, as Lottman says, "It is difficult to name a single really important French writer who was a traitor." It was one thing to have the Germans approve a play, something else deliberately to write pro-German dramas or articles. Aside from Drieu, the literary collaborationists, such as Robert Brasillach, were simply not in the same class as Malraux, Gide, Sartre, and Camus. Giraudoux was a reactionary and, like Cocteau, he did not object to being invited to German receptions, but neither of them wrote Nazi propaganda. The only writers of talent who were enthusiastic pro-Nazis were Céline and Lucien Rebatet. Meanwhile, the clandestine publishing house Editions de Minuit and the magazine *Lettres françaises* were in operation, and resisting writers organized the *Comité National des Ecrivains*. Many of these died in battle, in prison, or in the camps.

THE situation, in short, was complex. But before one remarks that so is life, which is the last defense of apologists for this period, one must ask oneself why so many people took refuge behind this argument. And in particular the intellectuals: Lottman's book is in large part the history of an anti-fascist movement among intellectuals, in a country where intellectuals had enormous influence upon the wider society. How is it that in a moment of real crisis, when the hardest of choices had to be made, complexity and nuance and all the other arts of self-justification suddenly came into their own?

One explanation is self-interest. People had to live—eating itself became a real problem in these years. (Gross as it sounds, one of the serious attractions of German embassy receptions was the banquet table.) Compromise became a matter of survival, or so it seemed: it is difficult to judge retroactively the relative advantages of total resistance and compromise in a desperate time. Was a young actor supposed

*Not all French workers in Germany were conscripts, however. Among the volunteers, according to evidence published last year in *L'Express*, was Georges Marchais, the French Communist party leader, who worked in a factory building war planes.

†Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 304 pp., $25.00.

**Subtitled "Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War," this book has already appeared in a French translation (Seuil) and will be published here by Houghton-Mifflin in March (352 pp., $15.95).

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to miss his chance—as it happens, to act in Sartre's plays—because the theater was no longer called the Sarah Bernhardt?

BUT TO pose the question this way is to miss the real point about France. One reason self-interest loomed so large had to do with the exhausted condition in which the country found itself. France had still not recovered from its victory in 1918. The 1930's had been spent defending the Republic against the extreme Right but also, because it simplified things, tolerating or excusing a rival totalitarianism, that of the Left and of the Soviet Union. After this, the French had to relearn the values that totalitarianism trampled upon, and in the meantime they were poorly equipped to recognize where duty lay.

Should the French nation as a whole be blamed for the consequences of collaboration? The tortured fascination that the French show for this period, as they try to come to terms with it, suggests that the answer is yes.

It is true that collective guilt is a concept of limited usefulness, not least because it smothers "complexity and nuance," the exceptions, the edges. Yet generalizations about nations' public policies, and about responsibility for them, not only are possible but have to be made if individual citizens are to have any self-respect. The Germans of the 30's and 40's are indeed responsible for unleashing upon Europe the worst catastrophe of its history. And among the villains of our devil-bound century we definitely ought to count, by all that is right, those whom Henri Amouroux, the chronicler of France in the Occupation, called *Quarante Millions de Pétainistes.*

Of course there were exceptions. Thousands if not tens of thousands of Germans were the first victims of the "socialist" totalitarianism that called itself "national." If there were between one and two million French soldiers who spent most of the war in POW camps, these can hardly be numbered among Amouroux's forty million. But just as the remnants of the Thaelmann battalion, handed over by the Vichy authorities to the SS and to their doom, did not represent Germany, so a few thousand *Gaullistes* in London did not represent France, even if they were the best France had.

The key to French history in the early 1940's is not, as some seem to think, that there were a few wicked opportunists and a growing number of brave patriots, but rather that, despite a few courageous souls, many were passive and more than enough were evil for evil to prevail.

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Born-Again Muslims

AMONG the BELIEVERS: AN ISLAMIC JOURNEY. By V. S. NAIPAUL. *Knopf. 430 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by J. B. KELLY

THE celebrated novelist V. S. Naipaul began his "Islamic journey" in Teheran in the late summer of 1979, eight months after the fall of the Shah and the concomitant enthronement of the Ayatollah Khomeini as de facto ruler of Iran. "Dear Guests. God Is the Greatest" read the sign that greeted Naipaul on his arrival at Teheran airport, and everything that he encountered thereafter in Iran was imbued with the same surrealist and menacingly comic quality. Teheran he found to be a city in chaos: what had not already broken down was in the process of disintegration, as if in the wake of some terrible natural disaster. Hysteria held much of the populace in its grip, fueled daily by large demonstrations (attendance at which was virtually obligatory) where a succession of mullahs, master practitioners of the art of invective, harangued the assembled mobs mercilessly—"a competition in frenzy or the display of frenzy" is Naipaul's impression of these occasions.

Everywhere, whether in the slogans scrawled on walls, in the tirades of the mullahs, or in the posters and other pictorial representations of the revolution, the emphasis was on death, blood, and vengeance. Everything was depicted in stark shades of black and white—oppression, revolution, martyrdom, the whole an intoxicating and noxious blend of the atavistic elements that lie at the heart of the Shi'i profession of Islam and the all-too-familiar sanguinary attributes of late 20th-century "proletarian" revolutionary movements. To Naipaul, the most troubling aspect of Iran's Islamic revolution was the intense rage it generated, a rage directed less against the late Shah and all his works than against Western civilization and its influence in the world at large. Yet the Iranians hungered for the products of Western technology. "Their possession," Naipaul notes, "was part of a proper Islamic pride." How were this anger at the West and the passion for its goods to be reconciled? By regarding these goods, Naipaul concludes, as neutral objects without recognizable provenance. "They were not associated with any particular faith or civilization; they were thought of as the stock of some great universal bazaar."

Thus, when Naipaul traveled to the holy city of Qum, the seat of Khomeini and the home of what seemed to be a thousand theological schools, all of them shrouded in a dense medieval twilight, he found that the learned divines who counseled the faithful to live their daily lives in consonance with a material order of things laid down over a millennium ago, and who constantly railed against the Christian West for its sinfulness and debauchery, did not scorn to make good use of telephones, automobiles, and the other fascinating artifacts of Western industry. Nor did the supreme divine of all, Ruhollah Khomeini, whom the great body of Iranian Shia now revere as the deputy of the Twelfth Imam (the messianic figure whose emergence will herald the ultimate triumph of Islam throughout the world), hesitate to avail himself of the gadgetry and weaponry of the decadent and infidel West. On the day of Naipaul's departure from Teheran airport, he watched American-made Phantoms of the Iranian air force take off, on Khomeini's orders, to strafe rebel Kurdish strongholds in the west of the country. "Later," Naipaul records, "I learned that two Phantoms had crashed, and the news was curiously sickening: such trim and deadly aircraft, so vulnerable the inadequately trained men within, half victims, yet men that morning obedient to the will of God and the Twelfth Imam and full of murder."

THE ambivalence toward the West that agitates the hearts and minds of the Iranian Shia carries over, so Naipaul discovered, into the next Islamic republic to which his travels took him—Pakistan, founded as a Sunni Muslim state at the time of the breakup of the former British Indian empire in 1947. Here he found an equally pervasive though slightly different brand of illogicality. Whereas in Iran people appeared to Naipaul to be maddened by anger and frustration, expending their energies in a continual round of demonstrations and outpourings of hatred (but not in hard work, as he tartly remarks, which was the only means by which the revolution might possibly have succeeded), in Pakistan he saw a populace cast down and debilitated by the failure of the original experiment of a modern Muslim state.

Since its inception, Pakistan has never developed the political or economic institutions necessary for the progress and prosperity of its people. The general reaction to this failure has been to blame, not the concept of the Islamic republic but the inadequacies and faults of the citizens themselves:

> Failure only led back to the faith. . . . If the state failed, it wasn't because the dream was flawed, or the faith flawed; it could only be because men had failed the faith. A purer and purer faith began to be called for. And in that quest for the Islamic absolute—the society of believers, where every action was instinct with worship—men lost sight of the political origins of their state.

To sustain its tottering economy, Pakistan now largely depends upon the export of its own citizens and upon the earnings they remit from abroad—notably from the Gulf oil states and from the infidel West. The many ironies implicit in the recourse to this economic expedient

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are captured by Naipaul in a passage which brilliantly encapsulates the whole Muslim dilemma of treating with a civilization held to be anathema by the true believer but whose liberties and institutions he is only too ready to exploit:

> All the rejection of the West is contained within the assumption that there will always exist out there a living, creative civilization, oddly neutral, open to all to appeal to. Rejection, therefore, is not absolute rejection. . . . [So] the emigrants pour out from the land of the faith: thirty thousand Pakistanis shipped by the manpower-export experts to West Berlin alone, to claim the political asylum meant for the people of East Germany.

From Pakistan Naipaul's quest for the motives and impulses which lie behind the contemporary resurgence of Islam took him eastward to Malaysia and Indonesia. There, in his conversations with local Muslims, mostly of the younger generation, he encountered the same intellectual and emotional confusions he had met among their Iranian and Pakistani counterparts. Rage, though less violently expressed than in Iran, characterizes the outlook of the young Malaysian Muslims—in this case a rage directed primarily against the Chinese community in the Malaysian Federation, at once cleverer, more industrious, and therefore wealthier than the Muslims. Again Islam seems to function not so much as a system of belief to enable men to reconcile themselves to the vicissitudes of life but as a vehicle for protest.

One begins to wonder, as one follows Naipaul down the Malay peninsula and across the straits to the Indonesian archipelago, if the spark which has ignited the Muslim revival may be nothing more than plain envy. Does Islam, whether in countries rich in natural resources or in less bountifully endowed lands like Pakistan, serve as nothing more than an avenue of retreat from the hurly-burly of the modern world? Does it, in the last analysis, only provide a rationalization for the failure of the Islamic state, a refuge wherein young "born-again Muslims" (as Naipaul calls them) can shelter from the chilling suspicion that the fatal flaw may lie not in the corrupting influence of the West, or even in men themselves, but in Islam as a politico-religious system?

Naipaul has written a splendid, profound, and utterly depressing book. Sincerity and humanity illuminate every page; the prose is a sheer delight; and the whole is a tribute to a deep understanding of the myriad complexities of the Islamic faith. Yet to read the book is to be left with an acute sense of hopelessness. Despite the gentle humor and graceful delineations of places and people with which Naipaul lightens his narrative, the overwhelming impression one carries away is of the awesome gulf that lies between the Muslim order, where the law is the grim law of punishment and vengeance, and the rational and liberal traditions of the West. At the same time, however, one is left with the irreverent and lingering suspicion that were it not for Western acknowledgment, an acknowledgment which the younger, semi-Westernized Muslims seem continually to crave, the present revival of Islam might lose some of its momentum and significance.

The Reich at Home

DARKNESS OVER THE VALLEY: GROWING UP IN NAZI GERMANY. By WENDELGARD VON STADEN. Translated by MOLLIE COMERFORD PETERS. *Ticknor & Fields. 163 pp. $9.95.*

Reviewed by SUSAN SEIDNER ADLER

The most interesting thing about Wendelgard von Staden's slim account of her recollections of growing up in Hitler's Reich is its great success in Germany. Since it first appeared in 1979, the book has gone through seven printings, and its author lectures throughout the country to packed audiences of all ages.

The memoir was originally written, as the author puts it, solely for her children. (She only gave in to her publisher's demands, she says, when after thirty years it struck her that telling her story was an act of piety to Hitler's victims.) It is a little story told with matter-of-fact simplicity. Mrs. von Staden grew up in a small farming village near Stuttgart as Wendelgard von Neurath, niece of Hitler's first foreign minister, although because of unspecified disagreements over debts on the family estate the two branches of the family were estranged. Since her father cared for little but hunting and painting small watercolors, the pivotal influence on Wendelgard's life, and the heroine of the book, was her mother, Irmgard, who is depicted as a Fabian socialist with strong political opinions, although we never learn what they were. We are told only that she had flirted with Marxism (or at least read some Lenin and Marx) and was leery of Nazism because she feared the devastating effects of war on her country.

Nonetheless, and "whatever the reason," Wendelgard's mother participated in Nazi activities, taking part in meetings of the Nazi Women's Corps, lecturing to the girls of the BDM (Bund Deutscher Madchen), and setting aside a room in the house to serve as headquarters for the Hitler Youth. Little Wendelgard and her brother, mesmerized by the "ideals and manly virtues" of the Nazi youth, joined in enthusiastically. When war came in earnest, Mrs. von Neurath withdrew from party activities and busied herself running the farm and managing the crews of forced laborers who worked it. "Mother would explain to all—whether they were Poles, Frenchmen, or Russians—that here there would be no war, here we would all quietly work together for our daily bread." As Hitler conquered country after country, she grew pensive: "With such extensive conquest, what plan for peace could Hitler possibly have, she wondered."

In 1944 the SS appropriated a small valley on the estate and surrounded it with barbed wire, watchtowers, barracks, and guards with whips and vicious dogs. "That's the special camp," her mother com-

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SUSAN SEIDNER ADLER, *who contributed "Bribing Delinquents to be Good" to our October issue, is a professional portrait painter.*

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mented, "and it has nothing to do with military purposes." "Those people in the camp are criminals," replied her father. "It's a good thing they're so well guarded." One day a detachment of inmates from the camp came to collect food. "'What kind of people are these anyway?,' mother asked, horror-struck. 'They're no longer human beings.'" The guard explained that they were Jews, "subhumans. You can see that for yourself." Although her husband cautioned her to stay out of it, Mrs. von Neurath did what she could to feed the detachments sent to the farm and gave orders to the guards that "nobody would be beaten here." The only prisoner that could be found to lead them to work was one old Alsatian; the Russians and Poles exploded at the suggestion that they come into contact with Jews, and "were put to work elsewhere on the farm." But the camp and its inmates became the center of life for the author, who was then in her late teens.

Slowly, she learned to tell the prisoners apart. "There was one who had a long, open sore on his leg which made a wet spot on his trousers." From them she learned of Maidanek, of Auschwitz, of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, of the gas chambers. She also learned that the camp on their property was a depository for the sick and dying from other camps, that every day seventy or eighty corpses were thrown into a clay pit on their land, which explained the "strange odor, heavy and foul, . . . creeping up as far as the village." The camp, however, was well hidden, and when the villagers occasionally asked questions, the von Neuraths kept discreetly quiet.

As soon as it became clear that the Allies were advancing, Mrs. von Neurath devised a scheme to save the surviving inmates. She would transform a series of tunnels into bunkers, stock them with provisions, and display a large banner as a signal to occupying forces—"Here are 2,000 men in greatest depression. Come and help." She trusted the commandant of the camp to help her with this rescue plan, but to her surprise, it failed: strangely, he was more interested in saving himself and his troops than the inmates, and simply made off with the provisions; furthermore, the Allied forces did not notice the sign. After three days, Mrs. von Neurath decided to bring the camp to the attention of the French troops. They found that 680 prisoners were still alive, though starving; 2,500 corpses were buried in pits or strewn around the camp.

When the Americans picked up Mrs. von Nuerath for questioning and held her for almost six months, a petition was circulated by former inmates attesting to her humane treatment of them. She was released. And so "Camp Weisengrund disappeared from the lives of most of us in the same way it had come, like a ghost or a bad dream. For most of us it had been just one more incomprehensible event at a time when fate toyed with people's lives as it pleased."

In its girlish sentimentality, wishful thinking, and skirting of the real issues this last quotation goes a long way toward illustrating the book's popularity in Germany. Innocence, in fact, is the implicit message of Mrs. von Staden's narrative, expressed both in her highly personal subject matter (there is something childlike in the book's narrow focus, limited as it is to family and village) and in her naively impersonal style. Events are catalogued in a neutral schoolgirl fashion without being refracted through Mrs. von Staden's presumably more mature vision. The few expressions of moral outrage come from outsiders—the French, the Americans, the inmates themselves—and are set down with an eerie detachment; we are left to guess at whether the author finds them comprehensible or not. I would guess she does not.

For instance, there is this revealing passage:

> All the men of the village were ordered to help take the camp inmates to nearby hospitals and sanatoriums. They returned that night, horror-struck by what they had seen. "The sick on bare cots . . . hardly any blankets," the men related, "and those blankets were so full of lice they crawled. Even the bedbugs were eating the lice. We've never seen anything

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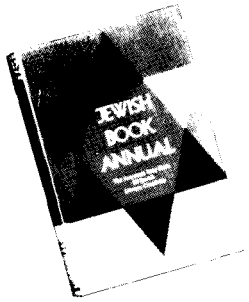

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like it. We had to carry the dead men to the pit. They didn't weigh a thing—just skin and bones. And we'll be the next ones to be thrown into that camp."

That's what we all thought. We felt certain that the French would put our whole village into the barracks and close the barbed-wire fence behind us. But instead the French set fire to the barracks. . . . Finally all that was left of the camp were charred beams lying in the field. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. The valley was free again at last.

But that is not all. Sensing that something more is expected of her, Mrs. von Staden finishes the passage in a characteristically lyrical-mystical vein:

> A cross was erected over the clay pit in memory of the 2,500 nameless people who were buried there. That summer, red poppies bloomed all over the valley. There had never been poppies in those meadows before—and they bloomed there only that one year.

What does it all mean? Mrs. von Staden, aware of her own ignorance, once again puts her trust in a Higher Being. Undoubtedly, she also trusts that we will understand; and in Germany, if sales are any evidence she is understood.

BY CONTRAST, a writer like the conservative Bavarian aristocrat, Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen, is not understood at all. His book of memoirs, *Diary of a Man in Despair*,* also dating from the Hitler years, and unquestionably a classic, was overlooked in his own country and has been more or less disregarded in this one since it first appeared here almost ten years ago. Hatred for Hitler was the central fact of Reck-Malleczewen's life, the seismograph by which he read the past and predicted the future. His commitment to the old order was not intellectual, moral, or sentimental; he would have found these distinctions contemptible. He did not find National Socialism repugnant morally, intellectually, or aesthetically; he recognized it to be the enemy of civilized life.

Gradually, as he described the destruction that he had predicted drawing nearer, Reck-Malleczewen grew more and more isolated. He refused to utter the phrase "Heil Hitler"; conspicuously walked out on a newsreel showing Hitler's celebrated jig over the fall of France; threw several delegations of Nazi commissars who had been sent to survey his property for an energy project unceremoniously off his estate; and ignored a draft notice for the Volkssturm. His journal ends in October 1944, the month he was arrested. In February 1945, he was killed in Dachau.

Whereas to Reck-Malleczewen National Socialism was an outrage, an affront to civilization, Mrs. von Staden appears in her book to be not so much anti-Nazi as against the uncomfortable realities of war. Although fulgent in her sympathy for the victims, she consistently evades the central issues. "I rack my brains trying to discover the meaning of this persecution of the Jews," Reck-Malleczewen wrote after Crystal Night. Mrs. von Staden's heroine had no problem explaining the matter to her daughter: "They're persecuted by Hitler because they're of a different race." "Because they crucified Jesus," the young Wendelgard puts in knowingly.

Mrs. von Staden is twice blessed. Although an aristocrat by birth, she embodies all the familiar middle-class virtues, particularly that comfortable blend of decency tempered somewhat by patriotism, and patriotism tempered somewhat by decency, that is so understandable to her countrymen and for which Reck-Malleczewen had such boundless scorn. Because she once suffered in silence, she can now be praised for her outspoken candor. She is human, as the saying goes, to a fault. Being fallible, she can be lauded for her decency. Reck-Malleczewen, on the other hand, committed an unpardonable sin: he was not only arrogant, but strong. Being good but not much better than most, she confers absolution; he, in his prophetic outrage, offers nothing but contempt.

It is an age-old problem. Virtues are more lovable than values. The impulse to heal, to soothe, and to

*Translated by Paul Rubens, Macmillan, $1.95 (paper).

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get on with it is sociable, the impulse to justice not only is not—it is worse, it is troublesome. Mrs. von Staden is pacific, benign, and did good; Reck-Malleczewen was abrasive, a crank, and did nothing. Those who look for our sympathy get it. Those who sit in judgment are judged. In Mrs. von Staden's pervasive humility, her loyalty not to values but to community ties, there is a suggestion of stupidity, of helplessness, that is the best defense of all, one that is not only endearing but undoubtedly strikes the most responsive chord in her readers. Life, goes the message, is a tricky balancing act for the solid citizen, for any reasonable person, but within the framework of the community, we do the best we can. Reason is equated with survival. It is equated also with community taboos. After the war, when the author's friendship with a former inmate raised so many eyebrows that her father said, "What you're doing, *mein liebes Kind*, isn't possible," she came to agree: "I knew that myself." The implicit reassurance here is surely not lost on her readers. How different from the scorn of a man like Reck-Malleczewen who had nothing but contempt for human weakness or compromises, and loathed the unthinking, reflexive actions of the mob.

THERE is a conventional Holocaust rhetoric that equates honoring the dead with remembering them, as if not forgetting corpses is important. There is a heartwarming ritual composed of flowers, memorials, and stones that is particularly popular in Germany. But does it really matter if we remember the name of one or any of the thousands of inmates who died on the Neurath property? Surely we have lost the only chance we had to be of any use to them. And knowledge, in and of itself, is useless.

Honesty of the von Staden "not forgetting" variety is soothing and popular. It is easy to be honest about what happened. It is much more difficult to be honest about how much it mattered, and why. And above all, it is difficult to be honest as Reck-Malleczewen was, in the present tense: that is, to be honorable.

If it is obvious why Mrs. von Staden met with such success in Germany, it is not quite so obvious why Reck-Malleczewen met with so little in the United States, while the memoirs of Hitler's Minister of Armaments and War Production, Albert Speer, published almost simultaneously, was greeted with a tidal wave of enthusiasm. In his brief mention of Speer, Reck-Malleczewen may himself provide a clue:

> Why should that lout named Speer worry, either, with that clean-cut expression of his, which is the epitome of this whole sickening, mechanical, little-boy-at-heart generation? I must admit something about Speer: after Papen, who combines the conscience and sense of honor of a butcher's hound with stupidity so devastating it is not an excuse but a crime, and just after these new German pseudo-Girondists and ersatz aristocrats of the type of Krupp *et al.*, his is the most sickening face I know among Nazidom's second-string —and he imagines himself to be the reincarnation of Leonardo da Vinci.

Reck-Malleczewen was right: in an age such as ours there is something not only ingratiating but titillating in the murderous cool of a Speer, and something unseemly, even embarrassing, in passionate moral outrage. How overheated Reck-Malleczewen's lines about Speer now must sound to a dispassionate reader, how overblown, bitter, and offensively arrogant they seem when little hangs in the balance and there is nothing at stake. Moral passion is merely gauche when the times no longer require it. Then it is evil, not goodness, that becomes fascinating. Then it is Speer who not only satisfies our prurient curiosity, but spares us embarrassment, while Reck-Malleczewen, who does neither, seems abrasive and out of place. Those who sound like prophets when the crisis comes, merely sound crotchety when the crisis is past. We may rely on them when the barbarians are at the door, but when the nightmare is over, and the barbarians have once more become good citizens who are guilty of no more

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than quoting bad poetry and overly loving their cars, it is the corpses we want to remember, and the prophets we want to forget.

King & the Communists

THE FBI and MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: FROM "SOLO" TO MEMPHIS. By DAVID J. GARROW. *Norton. 320 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by ERIC M. BREINDEL

FOR some time it has been common knowledge that the FBI engaged in a relentless investigation of Martin Luther King, Jr. during most of his brief public career. King was tailed as he traveled around the country; his telephone conversations were wiretapped; his hotel rooms were bugged. Efforts were made to discredit or destroy him by planting news stories about his supposed political and moral turpitude, by informing other civil-rights leaders and political figures about his personal life, and by using blackmail to induce him to leave the political scene or kill himself. In this book David J. Garrow, a historian at the University of North Carolina, sets out to review the Bureau's campaign against King, to examine what J. Edgar Hoover and his men came up with, and to consider the reasons for this FBI obsession.

It should be noted at the outset that Garrow produces no evidence to link the Bureau to the 1968 assassination of King in Memphis. Indeed he emphatically repudiates the thesis of FBI complicity in the crime. It should also be noted that Garrow's primary sources for this study are, ironically, FBI files, secured under the Freedom of Information Act. Were it not for the FBI's own record of its activities, this history of a key period in the civil-rights movement could not have been written. Garrow (who makes no secret of his distaste for the FBI's methods) is thus in the curious position of having produced a book whose most enlightening elements are the fruits of illegal conduct on the part of the U.S. government.

Be all that as it may, this is a superbly controlled and altogether fascinating scholarly enterprise. Garrow rejects the widely received wisdom that King was pursued by the FBI simply because Hoover and his organization consistently engaged in vicious combat against any public figure who had the audacity to criticize them. The FBI, it appears, was animated at least initially by more substantive concerns. Garrow identifies three distinct phases in the Bureau's investigation of King. The first involved links between King and American Communists: the Bureau sought to determine whether and to what degree Communists had infiltrated the civil-rights movement generally, and were exercising influence over King specifically. The second focused on King's personal and sexual life. In the third phase, the FBI searched out King's involvement in the anti-war campaign of the 60's.

The story Garrow relates is a sad one. The nation's leading law-enforcement agency is seen as a secret army controlled by men who were prepared for the flimsiest of reasons to countenance inexcusable violations of civil liberties. In the second "phase" of its investigation the FBI appears in a particularly grotesque light. During this interlude, a high-ranking Bureau official sent King a tape-recording of what would seem to have been an exceptionally active sexual encounter (involving King and a woman, or various women, other than his wife), along with a crude, FBI-drafted "anonymous" letter advising him to commit suicide: "You are done. There is but one way out for you. You better take it before your filthy, abnormal fraudulent self is bared to the nation."

IT MIGHT be tempting, on the basis of evidence such as this, to write off the whole episode of the FBI and Martin Luther King as a byproduct of the racism and irrational fear of social change that pervaded a broken-down police agency in a decadent period of its history. Garrow wisely resists this temptation. He explains that the FBI's initial concern over King and the Communists was shared by President Kennedy, his brother Robert, the Attorney General, and high-ranking Justice Department officials. The author does not deem this concern irrational. He patiently examines the issues, supplementing information gleaned from Bureau files with revealing evidence from personal interviews.

A politically inexperienced preacher from the deep South, King had been suddenly thrust into the national spotlight during the Montgomery bus boycott of 1956. He found himself on unfamiliar, often hostile, turf. As Garrow tells it, King was in need of assistance. As the director of a growing movement, he required help in handling complex financial matters, in evaluating the labor and other liberal leaders who were offering their advice and aid, and in preparing precise written statements on legal and programmatic issues. Some who came to King's side were men of impeccable political credentials, their intentions beyond reproach—Bayard Rustin is an obvious example. Others had been, or still were, committed Communists, like Stanley Levison and Jack O'Dell.

LEVISON, who provoked the greatest alarm among those concerned with King's ties to American Communists, is an interesting and important character in the story. Garrow is able to shed considerable light on this New York attorney who wrote parts of King's first book after negotiating a publishing contract for him, prepared his income-tax returns for 1957, and gradually became Martin Luther King's seemingly indispensable right-hand man.

According to Bureau informants well placed in the Communist party, in particular the brothers Morris and Jack Childs (Morris was, briefly, editor of the *Daily Worker*), Levison had been active in the highest echelons of the party. He was evidently involved in CP financial activities—as a key money manager and a secret donor—from just after World War II until some time in 1955, most intensely during the three years 1952-55. Levison's

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relationship with King commenced in 1956; the Childs brothers—code-named "Solo" by the FBI—did not know why Levison ceased at this time to be active in CP financial affairs. Information from Jack Childs suggests that the attorney remained sympathetic to the party until 1963, and then grew "disenchanted." (Levison died two years ago; he was eulogized at a memorial meeting by Andrew Young.)

The FBI was not particularly interested in Levison until the closeness between the attorney and King became apparent. As for Jack O'Dell, who met King in 1959 and soon became an important figure in King's organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he had an essentially public record as a CP activist dating back to the late 1940's.

President Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy, among others, warned King that his ties with these men were endangering the credibility of the civil-rights movement as a whole. King was reluctant to terminate his relationship with Levison and even wavered over O'Dell. The Bureau soon discovered that, despite King's claims to the contrary, he continued to remain in close contact with Levison.

There is no evidence that Levison and O'Dell were acting as agents of the Communist party in their involvement with King, the SCLC, and the civil-rights struggle. Still, their political histories suggest a long-standing commitment to a larger—and altogether discredited—cause. Men who were involved with American Communism, in all its Stalinist ugliness, as late as Levison and O'Dell were, and who never repudiated that involvement, made for dubious political allies. Whether King was simply naive, or motivated by a sense of personal loyalty to these men, remains an open question.

ANOTHER question, perhaps related to the matter of Levison and O'Dell, concerns what Garrow refers to as King's "journey from reformer to revolutionary." In the "third phase" of the FBI investigation it was revealed that King had undergone a seeming ideological metamorphosis. The apostle of nonviolent integration was telling friends and staff—needless to say, the FBI had a paid informant in the SCLC—that he considered himself a Marxist, that American society required a radical redistribution of economic and political power, and that "the black revolution . . . is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism." Garrow suggests that some of these attitudes went all the way back to King's years in divinity school, but there can be no doubt that it was during his brief span in the public arena, and particularly as he drew close to the anti-war movement, that King underwent a radical political transformation. The role of Levison and other Communists in this process can only be guessed at. It is well to bear in mind, though, that King remained to the end a strong-willed and profoundly thoughtful man—it would be simplistic to view him as a mere "tool" of individuals or political forces with their own agendas.

King's violent and untimely death leaves unanswered the question of what path he would have followed in the years after 1968. But the message of this book is that the FBI's apprehensions on that score were not misdirected or misconceived, at least from its own point of view. As the historians Richard Hofstadter and Frank J. Donner have pointed out, the FBI saw itself in this period as the guardian of the established social and political order, the defender of American values against adversary challenges. Despite the post-assassination myth of King as a reformer and a gradualist, Garrow notes that "in truth, Martin Luther King was much more a radical threat than a reassuring reformer." Ironically enough the FBI saw this truth more readily than did many others.

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The Stages of Man?

ESSAYS ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT. VOLUME ONE: THE PHILOSOPHY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT. By LAWRENCE KOHLBERG. *Harper & Row. 441 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL LEVIN

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG is a Harvard psychologist who has been insisting for two decades that the study of children's moral reasoning can guide society in distinguishing right from wrong. His work has been influential—it has supplied much of the impetus behind "moral education" courses that are appearing even in elementary schools. The present collection of essays is concerned with the moral and pedagogical consequences Kohlberg draws from his empirical findings about children, from cross-cultural studies, and from "longitudinal" studies of given subjects at different ages.

Kohlberg discerns six "stages of moral development." The first four are uncontroversial, extending from the child's obedience out of fear of punishment to the "my station and its duties" mentality attributed to J. Edgar Hoover. Stage 5, the "official morality of the U.S. Constitution," recognizes obligations based on contract, plus basic rights like life and liberty. Stage 6—to which this book is a sustained hosannah—adds "justice," interpreted as "rationally demonstrable universal ethical principles" based on "respect for the dignity of human beings as individuals."

What distinguishes stage 6 from stage 5 is, in effect, the willingness to disobey laws that conflict with these principles. Kohlberg estimates the number of stage 6's to be 5 percent of the American population, but his only sustained example of a 6 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Socrates sometimes rates a 6, but is elsewhere demoted to a "5B," apparently for taking the laws of Athens too seriously. (Kohlberg repeatedly compares King with Socrates as a "moral teacher" executed by the society he made uncomfortable, as if James Earl Ray were a legally appointed executioner.) Lincoln and Gandhi are accorded 6's in passing.

WHAT makes a later stage a higher stage? Part of Kohlberg's answer is the irreversibility of the sequence of stages: while most people become "fixed" at a stage lower than 6, no one ever retreats from a later stage to an earlier one. Ultimately, however, Kohlberg equates later with better because, he says, each stage resolves conflicts that remain unresolved at earlier stages. Thus, Kohlberg reports that his stage-5 respondents disagreed among themselves about whether a man may steal an expensive drug to save his wife's life, whereas his stage-6 respondents unanimously approved of stealing the drug. Stage 6 is hence the summit of morality because it is the most "formally adequate," "integrated" level of morality. Not only does it address every moral dilemma, but all who reach it will agree in their answers.

Kohlberg defends this patent absurdity—Socrates, King, Lincoln, and Gandhi would hardly have seen eye-to-eye about, say, homosexuality—by referring to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, "the newest great book of the liberal tradition," which "systematically justifies" stage 6. In resting his own case on Rawls's, Kohlberg is virtually asking the non-philosophical reader to accept his claims about stage 6 on faith. Still, the basic outlines of Kohlberg's position are clear.

According to Rawls, when you truly apply the Golden Rule to a problem, you are not distracted by your own preferences or the natural human tendency to put your own interests first. The principles you come up with will be genuinely fair, or just, principles. Rawls's basic idea is to devise a model situation in which people are really thinking along golden-rule lines. He has us picture rational egoists who have temporarily forgotten their actual places in society. In deliberating about principles that will govern their society, such self-regarding amnesiacs would imagine a principle's impact on people of every status, and so not slight any person or position, however humble. And Rawls adds an extra twist: his egoists pay most heed to how the *worst off* will fare, since (for reasons Rawls never quite clarifies) each is obsessively afraid that *he* will turn out to be the worst off when the "veil of ignorance" lifts.

Kohlberg illustrates the supposedly computer-like operation of this "method of musical chairs" with the issue of capital punishment. Rawls's model people would reject it, he says, because, while each recognizes the deterrent advantages of capital punishment, each thinks, "what if *I* were a murderer?" Each then realizes that the murderer would not want to be executed, and hence renounces capital punishment. Lest the reader accuse me of imputing to Kohlberg a position too preposterous for anyone to maintain, here are his own words: If we "assess the death penalty from the point of view of someone who takes into account the possibility of being a capital offender himself [we see that] the capital offender, obviously, would claim that he should be allowed to remain alive.... In short, at stage 6 the rational capital offender's claim to life would be given priority over the claim of maximal protection from crime asserted by the representative ordinary citizen."

Something has gone wrong. Kohlberg's magical argument against capital punishment really works against *any* punishment; presumably he would repudiate parking tickets for according double-parkers insufficient respect. Kohlberg has apparently confused what one would *want* in a difficult situation with what one would claim he *should* be allowed to have. Were I a murderer in the electric chair I would hope for a pardon, a power failure, or anything else that would save me, but I would hardly suppose I had a "rational claim" to a *right* to live that offset the claims of innocents saved by my execution.

This confusion between what people would be willing to do and what they would claim a right to do skews Kohlberg's understanding of the drug-stealing case, which he sees as a collision between "capital

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ist morality" and the "sacredness of life." While it is true that I would stick at almost nothing to save my wife's life, I would never claim a right on my part or my wife's to do what I would do. Nor would I do those things to save a stranger, even though, on Kohlberg's view, the issue involves a generalized right to life the stranger shares with my wife. (I think my attitude makes me a 3.)

Actually, far from resolving every hard problem, "equal respect under universal principles of justice" is an empty truism. Should Churchill warn Coventry about the planned Nazi bombing or remain silent to protect the secret that the British had cracked the Enigma code? Can British counterespionage frame an honorable U-boat captain to damage German morale? Any choice dooms someone, and avoiding the problem ("I don't want anybody's blood on my hands") amounts to choosing to spare the captain and risk extra Allied lives. Whatever the solutions to such dilemmas, the incantation of "equal respect for everyone" will not reveal them.

INDEED, it quickly becomes clear that Kohlberg is just making up stage 6 as he goes along. He scales the peak of arbitrariness when he counsels a stage-6 wife dying of cancer to concur in her own mercy killing: "If the wife puts herself in the husband's place, the grief she anticipates about her own death is more than matched by the grief a husband should feel at her pain." Kohlberg does not disclose how to determine the pain the wife will feel, the pain the husband "should" feel, or, indeed, what has become of the "sacredness of life."

In fact, there is no stage 6. Kohlberg fudges this by combining stages 5 and 6 in his statistics. Astonishingly, he admits in a candid paragraph that

> our empirical findings do not clearly delineate a sixth stage.... None of our longitudinal subjects have reached the highest stage. Our examples of stage 6 come either from historical figures [conveniently unavailable for answering questionnaires] or from interviews with people who have extensive philosophic training.... Stage 6 is perhaps less a statement of an attained psychological reality than the specification of a direction in which, our theory claims, ethical development is moving.

This trumpery shows Kohlberg's program of "moral education" for the instrument of propaganda it really is. Kohlberg's proposal begins modestly enough, with Dewey's insight that children learn best when challenged by problems that strain their current concepts. To this Kohlberg adds Piaget's discovery that certain key concepts are learned only in a definite order of maturation. What results is a general educational strategy of helping children through natural cognitive stages by posing stimulating problems. Kohlberg now applies this to morals: since a child is disposed to pass through the levels of morality anyway, the teacher should boost him along with provocative tales about theft and murder.

Kohlberg dismisses the idea that schools, especially public schools, should leave ethics to others with the admonition that a "hidden moral curriculum"—of conformity—always lurks behind official postures of neutrality. But Kohlberg's own pedagogy is anything but the Socratic midwife to a child's autonomy. Those tales of mercy killings and the like, a "hidden moral curriculum" if there ever was one, are designed to push children along a specific policy agenda that has nothing to do with any natural bents, let alone with "rationally demonstrable universal ethical principles."

BENEATH the platitudes and the jargon, Kohlberg's morality comes to a specious egalitarianism. It is hard to believe Kohlberg really thinks that any desire, however base or outrageous, deserves as much "respect"—i.e., satisfaction—as any other. But whatever "stage-6 moral

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ity" is, it is not synonymous with respect for persons as understood in the Kantian moral tradition Kohlberg claims to be following. Kantian respect means allowing each person to choose his actions freely and to accept the consequences of his choices. Such respect has nothing to do with satisfying the desires of the autonomous beings who are said to deserve it.

After interviewing a captured Nazi, the hero of Nicholas Monsarrat's autobiographical novel *The Cruel Sea* thinks to himself, "These people are not curable. We'll just have to shoot them and hope for a better crop next time." Hardly stage-6 thinking—which is why today I am alive to write this and you to read it.

Starved for Ideas

THE ROAD FROM HERE: LIBERALISM AND REALITIES IN THE 1980's. By PAUL TSONGAS. *Knopf. 280 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

THE problem that liberals continue to face, more than a year after the sweeping conservative election victory, is deciding whether to repackage their old ideas in different rhetorical wrappings or to come up with some genuinely fresh ideas.

This is no easy choice. The old ideas have the obvious virtue of familiarity. No one need tax his brain to remember them, and it is a relatively simple matter to employ smart and articulate people to devise imaginative ways of presenting them. Indeed, really clever ideological cryptographers can invent whole new codes, and so *appear* to the uninitiated to be saying something quite original.

Devising truly new ideas, on the other hand, takes far greater effort and is not without risks of its own. Ideological creativity is a rare gift, and one that liberals have not had to nurture since the mid-60's (some would say, the early 30's). It is not possible simply to hire people to come up with "new ideas" of any consequence or authenticity. Establishing Democratic "think tanks," founding journals, and holding conferences, symposia, and seminars is like plowing and fertilizing a field; unless the right seeds are available for planting, the crop is apt to consist of weeds.

New ideas are hazardous, too, particularly within such a doctrinaire, occasionally vicious, and slightly insecure crew as American liberals. He who offers a fresh thought, a novel policy, or an unconventional way of analyzing a problem risks charges of heresy, treason, or closet conservatism. (This condition is of course not peculiar to liberals. Recall the mockery and hostility with which traditional conservatives greeted the innovative ideas of "supply-side" economics, which nevertheless provided much of the conceptual basis for Ronald Reagan's successful campaign, however tattered those same ideas may appear fifteen months later.)

Whether liberals end up simply repackaging their old ideas or developing new ones depends more than anything else on whether they conclude that President Reagan's triumph was an "aberration," as Jimmy Carter termed it not long ago, or evidence of a fundamental and lasting shift in the attitude of the American people toward the role and mandate of the national government. For if the 1980 election turns out to have been but a temporary deviation from the course of the past four decades, and if the electorate can be "brought to its senses" by relentlessly calling attention to conservative failures, then one would have to be a very foolish liberal indeed to fuss about new ideas. But if a significant majority of the public has in fact lost faith in the beliefs, the diagnoses, and the prescriptions that have characterized national public policy for lo, these many years, if the "Reagan revolution" really marks the beginning of a new era, then only an unobservant, foolish, or suicidal liberal would settle for the old ideas, however fancy the wrapping.

SENATOR Paul Tsongas (D., Mass.) is a card-carrying liberal; a decent and conscientious person; a compe-

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tent solon; and an ambitious politician. Young enough at forty not to content himself with wistful backward glances and lamentations, and still new enough to Washington—he won his first congressional election just three months after Richard Nixon's resignation—to elude direct responsibility for most of the policies that Reagan ran against, he seems to be searching for a political faith, for a way of viewing the nation and the world that squares with his own humane instincts, that lends itself to a coherent set of policies by which to govern, and that will be acceptable to the voters of Massachusetts and in time, perhaps, the country as a whole.

But he is not a man of ideas. His earnest and forthright meditation on "liberalism and realities in the 1980's" is not a comprehensive policy platform on which to run for office, much less a systematic political philosophy through which "liberalism" can gain new meaning. Neither, one should add, is it a resentful diatribe against the evils, excesses, and shortcomings of Reaganism. Mostly it is a repackaging of familiar liberal ideas about how the world ought to work and what the federal government ought to do to make it work that way, as well as a chart of some of the shoals that liberalism must prepare itself to steer around if and when it regains command of the ship of state.

Senator Tsongas was scanning this particular horizon well before November 1980, and in fact won some attention and applause in June of that year when he warned the Americans for Democratic Action that "liberalism is at a crossroads" and "will either evolve to meet the issues of the 1980's" or be reduced to something of relevance only to historians. The present volume is an extension and elaboration of the concerns expressed in that speech. It is organized around eight "realities" which, in Tsongas's view, traditional liberal doctrine has either underestimated or mishandled.

These fall under three headings, one of which is interesting only insofar as it raises questions about Tsongas's own powers of perceiving reality. He is a rock-solid adherent of the "limits-to-growth" philosophy, much concerned with "overloading the biosphere," the finitude of fossil-fuel supplies, the scarcity of various other resources, and the need for policy-makers to make difficult choices among competing desiderata. It should not be necessary to point this out to a U.S. Senator, but it has been a long time since mainstream American liberalism neglected these "realities." Indeed, a not inconsiderable part of the reason it was shown the door in 1980 was its excessive attention to them.

Tsongas's second clutch of concerns has to do—somewhat contradictorily—with economic growth and how to foster it, preferably without inflation. To this end, he rounds up all the usual suspects but jails none of them. His policy prescriptions are familiar, mostly government-centered, and ultimately unpersuasive. He breaks with traditional liberal doctrine only in suggesting that "productivity and quality-control issues should receive due consideration in collective bargaining" and—in a particularly anguished passage—that anti-trust laws and various regulations (such as those enforced by OSHA) may have to be "modified" in order to make the American economy more competitive in world markets.

Finally he turns to foreign policy, having determined that the Soviet Union and the Third World are also "realities" worthy of consideration. Unfortunately, Tsongas's chapter on "War and Peace and the Soviets" is at best vacillating, at worst schizophrenic. Beginning with a candid acknowledgment that the Soviets are aggressive, relentless, and untrustworthy, it wanders into a long disquisition on how they, too, have problems that we must understand and try not to exacerbate; it warns that we "must come to grips with the actuality of Soviet military build-up" only to assert that the

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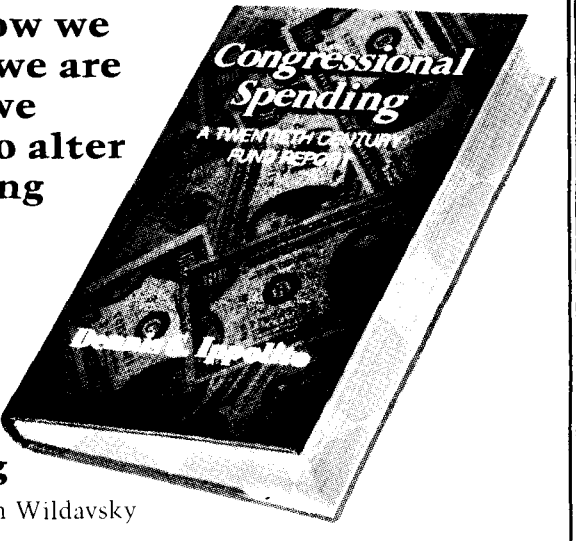

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SALT II treaty was, on the whole, well-conceived and worthy of ratification; it argues loftily for "leadership" on both sides and then reminds us of our supposed obligations to the conquerors of Afghanistan, the supporters of Vietnam, and the overlords of Poland: the United States must "provide an environment that enables the Soviets to adjust to the fact that history is no longer on their side, but without being overly threatening to them."

Tsongas, who was a Peace Corps volunteer (in Ethiopia), fares little better when he turns to human rights and the Third World. Again he starts off well enough, advocating a single human-rights standard, evenhandedly applied. He suggests that foreign aid should be regarded as an "investment" that in time will forge stronger bonds between the United States and the nations we aid—but the evidence he cites is the Marshall Plan, and he all but ignores the more tortured and less predictable geopolitical consequences of our assistance to ex-colonial societies that are not already allies.

His heartfelt belief that we should "stop giving up nations to the Soviets" is coupled with the altogether remarkable sentiment that East-West issues can and should be detached entirely from American relations with individual Third World nations. Perhaps the silliest foreign-policy observation shows up in the chapter on inflation, where Tsongas avers that one way of "attacking inflation at its roots" is to "be responsive to the Third World," so that "we don't throw away men and equipment and money on oppressive and unsupportable governments. Always remember that Vietnam is mainly responsible for the severe inflationary pressures still being felt today."

THE most striking thing about *The Road from Here*, however, is the omission of social policy from its range of concerns. Aside from a few pious sentences at the end, Tsongas makes no mention of the galaxy of issues most prominently associated with liberalism in the minds of most Americans: health, welfare, education, individual and group "rights," and the myriad of programs, regulations, laws, court decisions, incentives, and restraints associated with them. Though one can understand why Tsongas might tread lightly on such shaky ground as abortion, school prayer, busing, and quotas, it is extraordinary that he also chooses to ignore the aging of the population, poverty, illiteracy, children in need of day care, delinquents in need of understanding, abused spouses, discriminated-against minorities, rat-infested housing, decaying urban transit systems—in short, the mainstream issues of American liberalism in the modern era. That is where judicious application of the "limits to growth" mentality might be most constructive. The exhaustion of the Social Security trust funds looms much more imminently for Americans, after all, than the exhaustion of domestic oil reserves—and is a far more obvious candidate for governmental attention.

True, Tsongas is attempting to write a new agenda for liberalism, and believes that one liberal failing has been overmuch attention to social programs and insufficient awareness of problems and concerns on the minds of ordinary citizens. But there is not likely to be any renaissance of liberalism or restoration of Democratic rule until and unless those responsible for the major domestic policies and programs of the past forty years figure out why the ideas that animated them were so decisively rejected in 1980. The initiative still rests with conservatives, who already show signs of falling victim to excesses of their own but who are not apt to be stopped or even significantly slowed until there are authentic liberal alternatives, both domestic and international. That means more than retooling old ideas, or stringing together a selection of trendy new issues, or making pious pronouncements about the need for a politics of "compassion." It means nothing less than defining an ideology for what some are already terming neo-liberalism, and doing so before that phenomenon is given a bad name by its own prospective standard-bearers.

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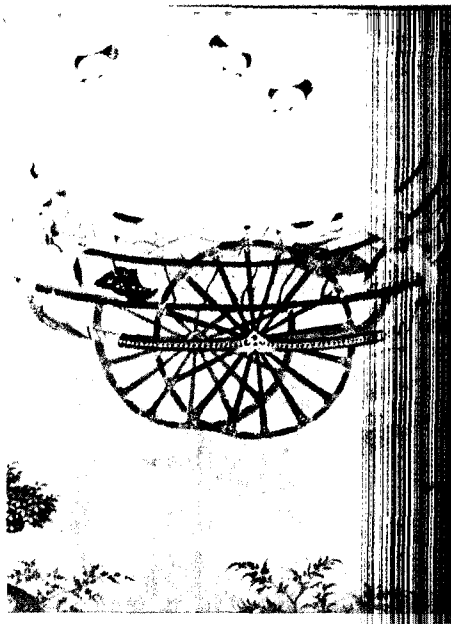

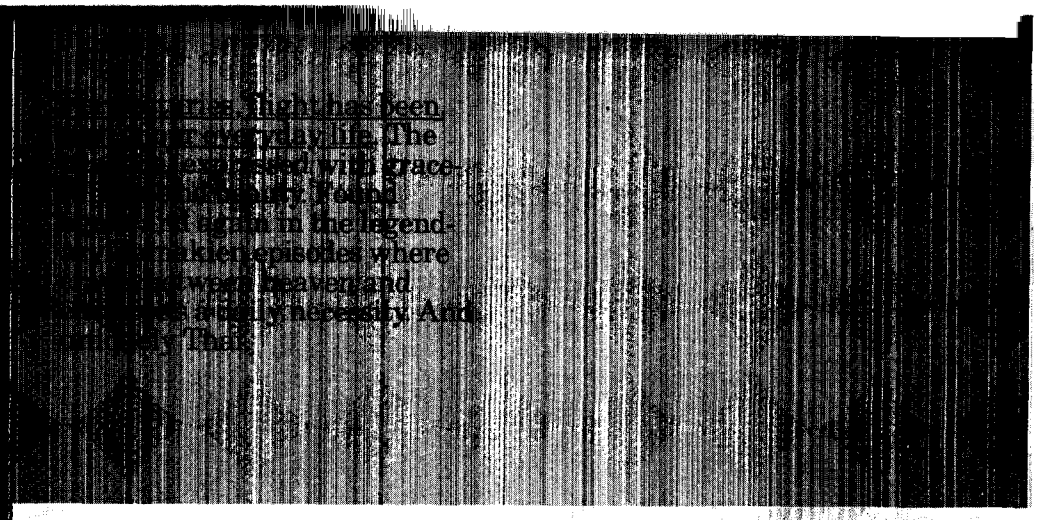

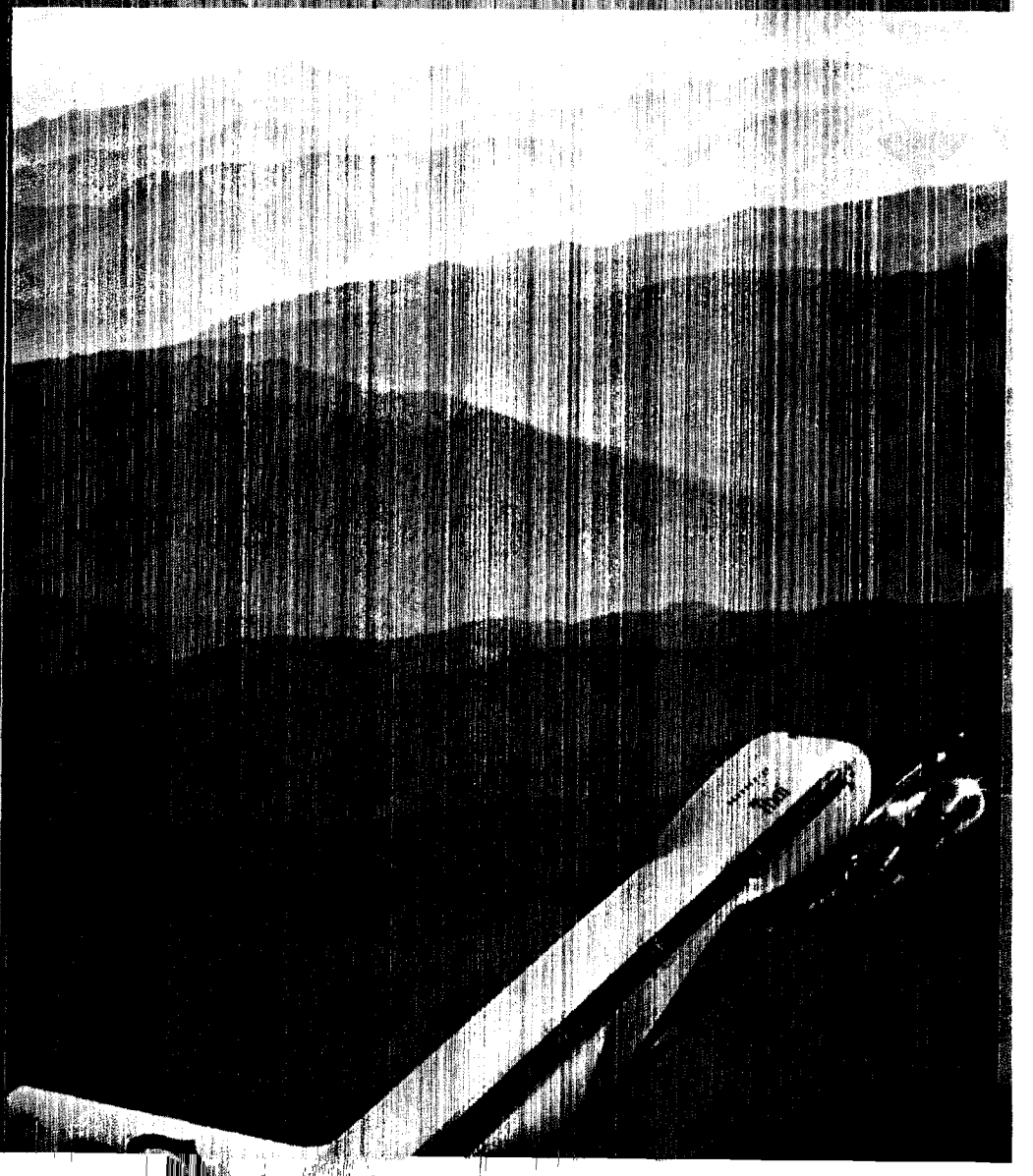

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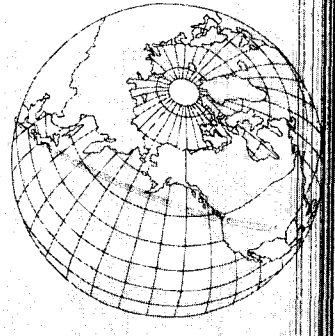

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